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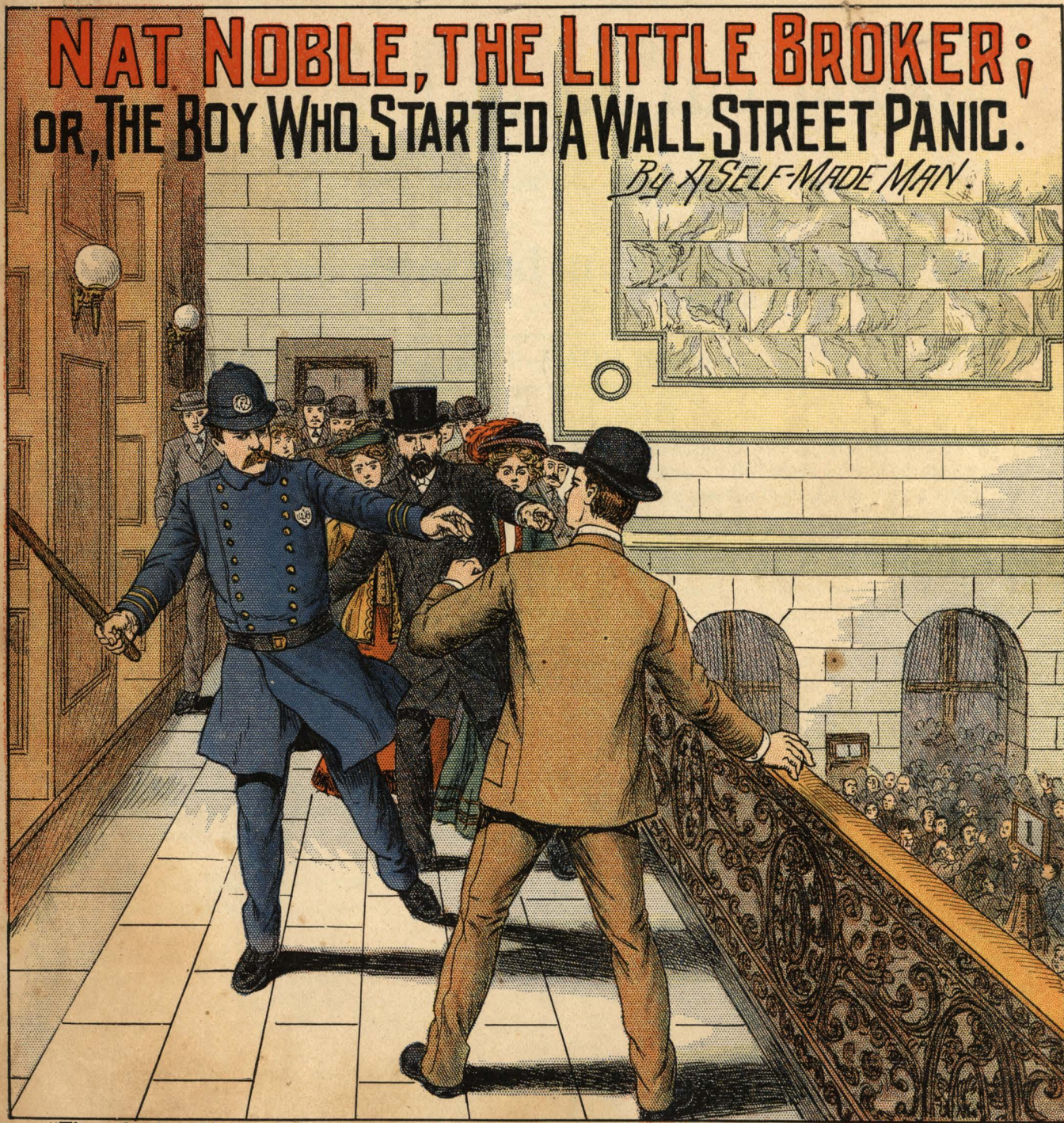
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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

NAT NOBLE, THE LITTLE BROKER; OR, THE BOY WHO STARTED A WALL STREET PANIC.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



"There he is, officer. Arrest him!" cried Broker Green. Nat turned and looked at them in astonishment. "Hold on there," he protested, indignantly, "what have I done?" The policeman, however, reached for him as though he was a common crook.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1908, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 24 Union Square, New York.

No. 130.

NEW YORK, MARCH 27, 1908.

PRICE 5 CENTS.

NAT NOBLE, THE LITTLE BROKER

OR,

The Boy Who Started a Wall Street Panic

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.

NAT NOBLE, THE LITTLE BROKER.

The tenants, chiefly brokers, of the fourth floor, Niobe Building, No. — Wall Street, noticed one morning that the vacant suite of offices on that floor had been let, for the following words appeared on the upper glass half of one of the doors:

NAT NOBLE,
Broker,

Stocks and Bonds Bought and Sold on Commission.

On the frosted glass of the adjoining door appeared, "NAT NOBLE—Private."

The traders who happened to pass that way stopped and looked at the doors with no little curiosity and some astonishment.

Most of them knew Nat Noble by sight and reputation, and one or two were personally acquainted with the boy, for boy he was.

They knew he was the nephew of Sylvester Noble, the millionaire stock broker of Exchange Place.

After graduating from high school, Nat, instead of entering college, decided to go into Wall Street and begin his business career.

He put in six months' time as messenger for his uncle, and was then promoted to the counting-room, where he spent another six months at a desk.

Then he was sent to the Exchange as assistant to his uncle's regular representative on the floor.

Up to the moment his name appeared on the doors of the suite of offices as a full-fledged broker on his own account he had spent six months buying and selling stocks for Sylvester Noble.

Almost every active member of the Exchange knew him either personally or by sight, and all of them liked him.

He was facetiously alluded to as the young dude of Wall Street, because he was uncommonly natty in his attire and gentlemanly in his manners.

The supposition among the traders was that he would eventually become a partner in his uncle's business.

Nat, however, had no intention of becoming his uncle's partner, even supposing Mr. Noble entertained such a view.

He proposed to go it alone.

He wanted to be the whole thing or nothing.

As soon as, in his own opinion, he believed he was able to branch out for himself, he went to his uncle and asked him to stake him to the tune of \$25,000 or \$50,000.

Mr. Noble tried to dissuade him from taking the bit in his mouth, suggesting that it would be more to his interest to keep on as he was doing for a year or two more.

Nat, however, objected, so the long and short of it was his uncle handed him his check for \$25,000 and told him he might as well learn a few things from experience now as at any other time, and wished him good luck.

So Nat immediately hired a suite of two rooms in the Niobe Building and had a sign painter put his name and business on the door of the reception-room.

He also hired a red-headed, aggressive-looking office boy, son of a poor widow who had once worked as laundress for his mother.

This boy's name was Andy Moore.

He was fifteen years old and a corker in his way.

His mother was very proud to have him working in Wall Street, and she told him that he must devote himself entirely to his young employer's interests.

It wasn't long before the news was all over the Street that Nat Noble was out for himself as a broker.

Most of the traders thought it was a good joke.

"His uncle is backing him, of course," said Broker Gummett to Broker Keating, when they met on the street.

"I dare say he is; but it's a wonder he would do it," replied Keating.

"Oh, he can deduct it from the boy's estate. His father left Nat \$100,000, I've heard, and Sylvester Noble is administrator under the will, and guardian of the boy."

"I wonder how much he let the boy have to start out with?" said Keating.

"He must have given him quite a sum, for it takes money to operate with. Besides, he's got a tidy suite of rooms on the fourth floor of the Niobe Building, and rents are pretty steep in the big office buildings."

"On the fourth floor, eh? He's making his debut in style."

"It's right in line with him. He's the dandy boy of the Street. He always looks as if he had just stepped out of a showcase."

"That's right. He's as spruce as they come down here. Let's go around and see him. Maybe we can unload a few shares of some stock that's hanging fire in our safes on him," chuckled Keating. "We might as well teach him a few kinks of the business to our own advantage as any one else."

"I'm with you, if he'll bite; but I rather doubt if he will. I've never noticed anything of the chump about him."

"Well, whether he'll bite or not, it is business for us to fish for a little of his fleece. All the boys will look on him as a fair mark to practice upon. Nothing like being the first in the field before he gets all his eye-teeth cut."

"I agree with you. Shall we give him a call now?" said Broker Gummett.

"Yes. I've nothing particular on hand at the present. The market is uncommonly dull of late. Nothing doing to speak of."

They started off for the Niobe Building.

Getting out of the elevator at the fourth floor they walked down the corridor till they came to Nat Noble's office.

Opening the door they walked in and saw the red-headed office boy sitting by the window reading a boy's library.

He jumped up and came forward.

"Is Nat Noble in?" asked Broker Gummett.

"Yis, sor. Do yez want to see him?"

"We do."

"What name shall I tell him, sor?"

"Tell him Mr. Gummett and Mr. Keating."

"Take sates, sors. I'll tell him."

Andy opened the door of Nat's private sanctum and disappeared.

"I suppose that's his messenger and office boy," laughed Keating. "He's got a fine brogue. It's as thick as a London fog."

Presently Andy returned and told them to walk inside.

"Glad to see you, gentlemen," said Nat, in a hospitable tone. "Help yourselves to seats."

"You've got a swell office here," remarked Broker Gummett, looking around and noting the fine furniture and appointments.

"The best is always the cheapest in the long run," replied Nat.

"It's quite a surprise to us to see you out for yourself, Noble," said Keating.

"I like to surprise my friends once in awhile," chuckled the boy broker.

"You have certainly done it," said Gummett. "You're the talk of the Street by this time. The boys are wondering why you cut loose from your uncle."

"I hope none of them are worried over the matter."

"No, I don't think they'll worry a whole lot," laughed Keating. "I suppose you haven't started to do any business yet?"

"Not yet. This is only my first day. I'm trying to get accustomed to my surroundings."

"Well, business is dull, anyway, otherwise we wouldn't be here at this hour of the day," remarked Gummett.

"I'm much obliged to you both for calling."

"Don't mention it, Noble," said Keating. "We thought it our duty to drop in and see that you got a good send-off. You don't want to let the first day go by without making some kind of a trade, if only for luck."

"I'm ready for a trade when I see one in sight that promises a profit."

"Perhaps I could put you in the way of such a one. I've got a thousand shares of D. & Q. I'd like to dispose of, as I'm pressed for funds. I could let you have the stock cheap," said Keating.

"D. & Q. doesn't seem to be very active just at present," replied Nat.

"None of the stocks are very active, for that matter. It's as good as any on the list to take a flyer in."

"What are you asking for it?"

"I'll take 45, seeing it's you," said Keating.

"I think that's too rich for my blood, Mr. Keating."

"It's easily worth 46."

"I'll not dispute your word, but I don't care to tie my funds up in it."

"It wouldn't hurt you to buy 1,000 shares, would it? The market will get lively in a few days, and you ought to make three or four thousand out of the deal."

"I'll consider the matter. If I decide to buy some of it I'll drop around and see you."

"I may change my mind about selling by that time, if I can raise the funds some other way. I'm offering you a good thing just to encourage you."

"Maybe Mr. Gummett might like to take advantage of your offer."

"No, I'm not buying at present. I'm selling," said Broker Gummett.

"What have you got to sell?"

"I could let you have 500 shares of O. & G. at 39. That's almost like giving it away."

"O. & G. is a drug these days. Now, if you said A. & C. I might talk business."

"Are you looking for A. & C.?" asked Gummett.

"I wouldn't mind taking in a few shares of it," said Nat. "That is, if the price was right."

"I haven't any of it," said Gummett. "Got any, Keating?"

"Not a share. I don't consider it half as good as D. & Q., and it ranges much higher. If you want to give me an order for it, Noble, I'll get it for you. How many shares do you want?"

"It's going at 54. How would you like to sell me a ten-day option on it?"

"Buying options, are you? I haven't been doing anything in that line lately. Still, I might accommodate you. For how many shares?"

"Say 3,000," replied Nat.

"I'll let you have it at 57."

"What deposit do you want?"

"Oh, five per cent. of the current value."

"I'll take you. Write out your document and I'll hand you the money," said Nat briskly.

"Say, Noble, have you a line on A. & C. that you're willing to pay 57 for it in ten days, when you can get all you want for 54 on the Street this minute?"

"The fact of the matter is, Mr. Keating, I haven't the money to buy it at 54 to-day, but in ten days——"

"Oh, I see. But, of course, you're counting on a rise?"

"Yes, that's one of the chances I'm taking."

Broker Keating wrote out the option for 3,000 shares of A. & C., at 57, and Nat paid him five per cent. of the market value, 54, which was \$8,100.

The two traders stayed awhile longer and then took their leave.

CHAPTER II.

THE LITTLE BROKER MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF EUNICE BOND.

"What are you going to do, Keating?" asked Broker Gummett, when they were on their way to the street. "Going to buy the 3,000 shares now at 54 and hold it for delivery, or are you going to take a chance that it won't go up for some days yet, at any rate?"

"Take a chance, of course," replied Keating. "I don't see any signs of the market getting active for several days. Under such circumstances you don't suppose I'm going to tie up \$162,000 of my good money in A. & C., do you?"

"No, of course not. You can buy it in any time inside of the ten days and clear a matter of \$9,000. I think you've got the best of that deal."

"I think so myself, or I shouldn't have given him the option."

"I wish I had got something like that out of him myself."

"Then go up to-morrow and offer to sell him an option on A. & C. yourself."

"I think I will," replied Gummett; "but it's a question whether he'll take me up. The 3,000 he got from you may be all he may care to handle."

"There's no harm in trying. His fleece is as good as any one else's."

"I think it's a little better, if anything."

The two brokers then walked over to the Exchange to see how things were going there.

In the meantime Nat was looking at Keating's option in his office.

"I guess Mr. Keating thinks he's got me where the hair is short," chuckled the little broker; "but that's where he'll be fooled. Uncle Sylvester let me in on the tip that a combination has been formed to boom A. & C., and that the stock will be up to 65 or 70 inside of ten days. I don't believe Keating will buy the 3,000 shares yet awhile, even for the certainty of \$9,000 profit, because no broker cares to tie up \$160,000 odd for ten days if he can avoid it with the chance of making the profit anyway, not to speak of an additional haul if prices should happen to go down, which is always a possible contingency. If he'll only hold off long enough he may suddenly discover that the stock is cornered, and then he'll have to do some tall hustling to find 3,000 with which to meet his option."

Nat locked the option in the safe, put on his hat and went out.

He, too, went to the Exchange.

He couldn't get on the floor now, as he no longer represented his uncle, so he had to content himself with going into the visitors' gallery.

The market was slow, and there was comparatively no excitement.

Nat saw Broker Nugent circulating around among the traders in a quiet way, occasionally making a note on his tablet and exchanging slips with a broker.

He easily judged what he was doing, for his uncle had told him that Nugent was one of the brokers employed by the pool to buy in A. & C. shares.

After remaining something less than an hour Nat went to lunch.

His favorite eating house was on Broadway, an inexpensive place, patronized by clerks and the general public.

The waiters here were girls, and every one of them knew the little broker by sight, and were glad to exchange a word and a smile with him when he came in, for he was a handsome young fellow, with light, curly hair and a winning way, and he never failed to hand them a small tip.

After he had finished his lunch and was out on the street again he walked to the Consolidated Exchange and took a look in there for about a quarter of an hour.

Coming out on Broadway again, he was on his way to Wall Street when his attention was attracted by the clang of an approaching fire-engine.

The vehicles in the street began to get out of the way of the smoking steamer, with its jingling hose-cart behind.

Nat stepped to the curb and looked up the street toward the post-office.

Then he saw the engine, drawn by three splendid-looking horses, coming down at a two-forty clip, the driver leaning forward and guiding the animals with his eagle eye and muscular arms.

Clang—clang—clang!

Toot—toot—toot!

It always makes one's blood tingle to witness the onward rush of a fire-engine, with the noise and bustle that attends it on its way to a fire.

At any rate, Nat never let one get by without stopping to look at it.

He was standing only a few feet away from Wall Street.

At that moment a very pretty young girl, neatly but not expensively gowned, started to cross the street from the church.

Whether it was that she was preoccupied, or for some other reason, she did not notice the engine that was rushing down on her like a small whirlwind.

A score of people saw her danger, and many voices were raised in warning.

She did not heed them, but kept right on.

The driver saw her, and clanged the gong at his feet furiously.

He could not turn out, for an electric car was coming toward him on the track, while an express wagon pushed ahead on the other side of the car.

All he could do was to haul in on the horses and apply the brake.

The girl now woke up to her peril, but instead of springing forward, as she might have done, and saved herself, she stood still in her terror in the middle of the space through which the engine had to pass.

The engine could not be stopped in time to avoid hitting her, and the onlookers were preparing to witness a tragedy, when out from the curb flashed Nat Noble.

He picked the terrified girl almost from under the heads of the fire horses and staggered over and fell with his burden on the car track.

There was a rush of people from the curb in front of the church as the engine darted by and kept on down toward Bowling Green.

Soon a mob of hundreds had gathered around the plucky little broker and the girl he had saved by the narrowest of margins.

Willing hands helped them both on their feet, and there was no lack of commendation for Nat, who was regarded as a hero by the crowd.

Taking the dazed girl by the arm, Nat said:

"Make way there, please, gentlemen. Make way. The excitement is all over. Nobody has been hurt. Kindly make way and let us reach the walk."

It was hard to make that mob understand that they should yield a passage for the principal actors in the incident.

Everybody wanted to catch a glimpse of the girl and her gallant rescuer.

Nat, however, succeeded in getting over to the sidewalk with the fair girl, who so far hadn't uttered a sound.

She was so white, and walked so unsteadily, that the little broker thought she was going to faint.

He managed to get her inside a big drug-store, and assisted her to a chair.

Outside, the doorway was blocked up by a crowd of curious faces.

The druggist came forward to see if he could be of any assistance, but his services were not required.

As soon as the young lady recovered her composure a bit she began to thank the young broker for saving her life.

"How brave you were to come to my aid! You might have been run down and killed by those horses. I hope you believe that I'm very, very grateful to you, indeed. But for you I know I must have been terribly injured, if not killed outright. I never can thank you sufficiently for what you did for me—never!"

"I'm glad I was able to save you from a bad fix, Miss—may I ask your name?" said Nat.

"Bond—Eunice Bond. Will you tell me yours?"

"Certainly. My name is Nat Noble."

"I think I have seen you before, Mr. Noble," she said, hesitatingly. "Are you not employed in the Vanderpool Building with Mr. Sylvester Noble?"

"I was until last Saturday. Sylvester Noble is my uncle. I am now a broker myself, with an office in the Niobe Building, in Wall Street. Are you employed in the Vanderpool Building?"

"Not exactly. I have an office in the building."

"An office?"

"Yes. I am a public stenographer. My office is on the tenth floor. I shall be pleased to have you call any time you are in the building."

"It will give me great pleasure to do so, Miss Bond. If you are quite recovered now I will, with your permission, escort you as far as the Vanderpool."

"Thank you," replied the girl, rising from the chair.

The crowd outside had broken up by this time and they attracted no attention as they left the drug-store.

Nat saw Eunice Bond as far as the Vanderpool Building and then left her, promising to call at her office in a day or two.

The little broker had met a great many nice girls, especially in the upper social circle to which he belonged, but none of them had made the impression upon him that Miss Bond did.

She was a lovely-looking girl, but her chief charm lay in her eyes, which possessed a magnetic quality that attracted Nat with an irresistible force.

"She's a fine girl," he said to himself, as he continued on to his own office. "A mighty fine girl. I'm glad I was so fortunate as to be able to render her a service. I never met a girl I liked so well. I must certainly know her better."

All the way back to the Niobe Building Eunice Bond's wonderful, big, expressive eyes were before him, and he could think of nothing else but the girl whose life he had saved in so plucky a way.

CHAPTER III.

THE LITTLE BROKER CLEANS UP A BIG WAD ON A. & C.

"Several gentlemen were in to see you, sor," said Andy, when Nat walked into his office.

"Did they leave their names?"

"Only wan of thim. He said his name was Green."

"I know him. They were brokers, I dare say. Come up to congratulate me upon my debut as a trader, and to size up my place here."

"There was a b'y here, too."

"A messenger boy?"

"Yis, sor. He brought some kind of a missage in an envelope. I put it on your disk."

"All right, Andy."

"He wor a mighty cheeky b'y, sor."

"Cheeky?"

"Yis. He called me 'Reddy.' He wanted to know whether I wasn't afeard of sittin' the bed on fire whin I put me head on the pillow. He said if he was a fire insurance agint he wouldn't issue a policy on the house where I lived without puttin' an extry hazardous clause in it about me hair. Whin he asked me if me mother had red hair, too, I got mad and tould him to git out of the office or I might forgit mesilf and run him out."

Nat laughed heartily at the look of virtuous indignation on Andy's countenance.

"You mustn't mind these messengers, Andy. They're always on the lookout for an excuse to give another boy a roast. I was a messenger myself once, and know how it is. They used to guy me a whole lot about my clothes. They called me the little dude of Wall Street. I had to polish two or three of them off, and then they let up on me a bit."

"Ye did polish 'em off, sor, did ye?"

"Oh, yes. I had to in self-defense."

"Thin I s'pose ye won't have no objection if I should be after polishin' one or two of thim off mesilf?"

"You mustn't look for trouble, Andy," advised Nat.

"No, sor, I don't mane to look for it; but if the b'ys don't lave me red head alone I'm thinkin' trouble will be after comin' their way, so I do."

Andy wagged his shock-head in a menacing way that boded ill for a persecutor.

Nat went into his private room, picked up the note and read it.

It was from his uncle, and commissioned him to go around among the offices in Wall Street and buy as many shares of D. & G. as he could get, as quietly as possible.

All deliveries were to be made C. O. D. at the Bank of South America.

Nat started out at once to try and get the stock.

He visited all the brokers' offices on that floor first, but found none of the stock.

He got 2,000 shares on the floor below, and then began the tour of the second floor at Broker Hooker Green's office.

"Hello, Noble," said Green. "Take a seat. I was up at your den a little while ago with some of the boys, who were anxious to see how you were getting on, now that you have started out for yourself. Done anything yet?"

"Not much. I have an order for a few shares of D. & G. Got any?"

"I've got a block of 5,000. It can't be divided."

"How much are you asking for it?"

"Eighty-one."

"I'll give you 80 5-8."

"Make it seven-eighths and you can have it."

"It's a go," said Nat, hauling out his memorandum pad. "Deliver it C. O. D. at the Bank of South America."

"All right," said Green, and they exchanged papers. "I suppose your uncle is backing you, Noble?" asked the trader, curiously.

"No, sir. Whatever money is behind me is my own, not my uncle's."

"That so? Everybody believes that your uncle is backing you."

"I'm not responsible for what everybody believes."

"That's true enough. By the way, where did you get that office boy you have?"

"What's the matter with him?"

"He's rather different from the usual run of boys down here."

"That won't hurt him any. I can thoroughly depend on him, and that's the kind of office boy I want."

"He's got a mighty rich brogue. Is he a late importation?"

"He is rather new to the country."

"The other boys are likely to make life strenuous for him when he gets out on the street."

"I'm thinking the boot will be on the other leg if they get funny with him. He's as strong as a young bull, and I'd back him to make things interesting for any lad of his size who tackles him. Well, I've got to be getting on. Drop up and see me, Mr. Green, when you've nothing better on hand."

"I will," replied the broker, turning to his desk.

Nat then canvassed the rest of the floor and got 3,000 more shares of D. & G.

By noon next day, he had bought 40,000 shares for his uncle, and his commission amounted to \$5,000, which was a pretty tidy sum for him to earn in so short a time.

The market continued dull for the rest of the week, though A. & C. went up one point.

Nat had managed to buy 5,000 shares of the stock on margin at 54 1-2, but that was all he was able to secure.

"If Keating hasn't bought in those 3,000 shares to cover his option, it's my opinion he's going to be out and injured before many days go by; but that's his funeral, not mine," said Nat to himself.

On Monday morning the market woke up, when a well-known broker came on the floor of the Exchange and began bidding for A. & C.

Nobody seemed to have any for sale, and the price began to boom.

Keating had been out late the night before and didn't reach his office till half-past eleven.

He was feeling kind of rocky as it was.

The cashier went in to call his attention to the market, which was going up, and particularly to A. & C.

"You'd better go out and buy those 3,000 shares you sold Noble the option on," he said respectfully.

"Why? Has he called for the stock?"

"No, but there seems to be a boom on in it. I looked at the ticker a moment ago and noticed that it has gone up four points this morning."

"Four points! The dickens you say!" cried Keating, in some consternation, turning to his own private indicator and grabbing the tape.

He soon saw that there was something doing in the stock, without a doubt.

Quotations were coming out rapidly, and at that moment the price was up to 59 1-2, which represented a loss to him on the option of \$7,500, for he was bound to deliver the stock to Nat at 57.

He got his hat on pretty quick, and rushed over to the Exchange.

By the time he had sized up the situation A. & C. was ruling at 60.

He made strenuous efforts to get the stock he wanted, but there was none coming out, whereupon he realized that he had been caught by a corner.

Gummett met him on the floor.

"Haven't you got those shares yet that you sold Noble at 57?" he asked.

"Not a share," replied Keating, with a mild imprecation. "That young rascal must have been tipped off about what was going to happen, that's why he was so eager to buy that option from me. I was a fool not to have gone right out and bought the stock when I could have got it at 45. Did you sell him an option, too, as you thought about doing?"

"I'm thankful to say that I didn't. I haven't been near him since that afternoon. I had other fish to fry," replied Gummett.

"You're lucky. There doesn't seem to be any doubt but that A. & C. has been cornered by a combine, and that option may cost me a pretty penny before I'm through with it. I hate to be euchred by a boy."

"It is rather annoying, but you'll have to take your medicine, I'm afraid, and try and get back at him later on."

"It's my opinion that his uncle tipped him off to this rise. Sylvester Noble is always in some pool or another for bulling the market."

"I wouldn't be surprised but that is where he got his information. It would be quite natural for the old man to want to boost his nephew to the front."

"Well, I must make another effort to get those shares. I see 62 is already being offered for it."

Keating got 1,000 shares during a lull, at 66.

The other 2,000 he had to pay 69 for.

He then sent Nat notice that he was ready to deliver the stock.

As the option had two days more to run the little broker was in no hurry to call for the shares, especially as his uncle had told him that the price would probably go to 75.

Nat watched the market closely from the visitors' gallery, and when A. & C. got as high as 73 he ordered his 5,000 shares sold.

That gave him a profit of about \$90,000.

He then went around to see his uncle.

"I want to borrow \$150,000 from you, Uncle Sylvester," he said.

"The deuce you do. Are you in trouble already?"

"No. I bought an option on 3,000 shares of A. & C. at 57 the other day, and I want to take it up and sell the shares."

"Who from?"

"John Keating."

His uncle laughed.

"So you've caught that old warhorse, eh?"

"Looks like it. The joke of the thing is he thought he was going to catch some of my fleece. The stock was ruling at 54 when I made the deal with him, and he probably could have picked up the shares at that figure then if he had wanted to and made a good profit independent of what I'll make. But as the market was pretty slow last week I've got money to bet that he didn't buy until the stock started to rise yesterday. And then it's dollars to doughnuts he found the shares as scarce as hen's teeth."

His uncle laughed again.

"How much longer has the option to run?"

"Another day."

"Let me see, the price is about 75 now. You'll make a good thing out of that option. Is that all the use you made out of my tip?"

"No, sir. I bought 5,000 shares at 54 1-2 and have just sold it at 73. That'll give me a profit of \$90,000."

"You're doing pretty well for a beginner. Well, I'll give you my check for the money you want. Sell the stock as soon as it's in your hands."

"That's what I mean to do, sir," replied Nat.

He got the check, carried it around to the Bank of South America and cashed it, and then he called on Keating for the stock.

"This is the time you got me where the hair is short," said the trader, grimly, as Nat handed him the balance due, \$162,900, and took the shares.

"That is your fault, not mine. You were not obliged to sell me that option."

"That's right. Next time I'll know better when I'm dealing with you, young man."

"Well, don't let us have any hard feelings over it," said Nat. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll let you sell the shares for me. That will give you a commission of \$375. I'd sooner give it to you under the circumstances than any one else."

"All right," replied Keating. "You're acting square enough. You can't blame me for feeling sore because I'm out about \$33,000 on the deal."

"You've been long enough in the business to learn that you can't win all the time, Mr. Keating," replied Nat, rising to take his leave.

Keating sold the shares for him that afternoon at 74, and Nat made a profit on his option deal of something over \$50,000.

Thus, inside of ten days, Nat Noble had increased his small capital of \$25,000, which came out of his share of his father's estate, to \$170,000.

If the natty little broker felt as if he needed a larger size hat to accommodate his curly head the reader will probably not be surprised.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LITTLE BROKER IS THE VICTIM OF A SCURVY TRICK.

Next day Nat went around to call on Eunice Bond at her office on the tenth floor of the Vanderpool Building.

He found her up to her eyes in business, with four girls helping her out.

They were all good-looking girls, too, and they sized the little broker up as a dude, and wondered what business he had with Miss Bond.

They noticed that she greeted him with great cordiality and seemed very glad to see him.

In spite of Nat's dudish appearance his good looks made a great impression on the four girls in the room, and they were continually glancing in his direction while he remained there.

There wasn't any doubt but every one of the girls would have given something for an introduction to him.

They didn't get it, however.

"Well, I'm awfully glad to see you, Mr. Noble," said Eunice.

"Not more so than I am to see you, Miss Bond. I'm

afraid you've occupied a good share of my thoughts since I made your acquaintance in such a strenuous way."

Nat's eyes said even more than his tongue, so that the girl dropped hers to her desk, while a vivid blush suffused her cheeks.

"You are very kind to think of poor me," replied Eunice, in a low tone, without looking up.

"Don't mention it. I'd give a whole lot to know whether you thought of me since that day."

"Why, of course I've thought of you. How could I help doing so, after what you did for me?"

"I regard that afternoon as my lucky day," said Nat.

"Indeed!"

"Yes. I consider myself lucky in making your acquaintance."

"I suppose I may accept that as a compliment," she replied, flashing a sidelong glance at him that set his heart beating like a trip-hammer.

"I don't believe it would be possible for me to compliment you as much as you deserve," answered the little broker, gallantly.

"Dear me! I'm afraid you're a great flatterer," she said, blushing, but nevertheless secretly pleased at his words.

"Not at all. I mean every word I said. I hope you will permit me to know you better, as I like you very much, indeed."

"I shall be glad to see you whenever you care to call here, Mr. Noble," replied Eunice, not looking at him.

"Thank you, Miss Bond. That's kind of you. I regard your friendship as a precious favor, and I trust it may not be broken."

"I don't think there is any danger of that on my part. I should be an ungrateful girl if I ever forgot what I owe you," she answered earnestly. "Mother is also very grateful to you for saving my life. I am sure she would be glad for a chance to thank you in person."

"Oh, I don't want to be thanked any more. If you will allow me to be your friend it is all the reward I ask. It would give me great pleasure to meet your mother, of course. Any day she comes down to your office you can notify me and I'll come right over. Here is my business card."

"My mother goes out very seldom, as she is something of an invalid. If you would care to call at our home we should be delighted to have you do so."

That was an invitation Nat had been angling for, and he accepted it right off the reel, assuring Miss Bond that he would be glad to call.

"Then I will give you our address," she said, writing it down on a slip of paper and handing it to him.

"Thank you," said the little broker, folding it up and placing it as carefully in his vest pocket as if it were a million-dollar banknote. "What evening would be most convenient for me to come up?"

"Most any evening, though I would prefer if you could let me know beforehand so that my mother could be prepared to meet you."

"How will Friday evening of this week do?" asked Nat, eagerly.

Friday evening was quite satisfactory to Miss Bond, and she said she would look for him on that night.

Nat then wished her good-bye and returned to his office.

Andy said nobody had been in while his young employer had been away, and Nat passed on in to his private room.

He had hardly seated himself in his chair before Andy entered and said that Mr. Green wished to see him.

"Send him in, Andy."

Broker Green entered the room.

"Say, Noble, got any money lying around loose that you don't want for, say a week?"

"I have a few dollars that are not very busy just at present, Mr. Green. Why?"

"I'd like to borrow \$50,000, if you can spare that amount."

"How much are you willing to pay for the use of it for a week, and what collateral have you to put up?"

Green stated what he was willing to pay for the money, and said he would put up 2,000 shares of Midland Central, the market value of which was 42.

"Fetch up your stock and I'll let you have the money," replied Nat. "Return in about twenty minutes. I haven't so much money on the premises. I'll have to go out for it."

"All right," replied Green. "Much obliged for the accommodation. I'll be back in about half an hour."

Nat went to the Washington Safe Deposit Co.'s vaults, a few doors away, where he kept his funds, got \$50,000 out of his box and returned with it to the office.

Green returned within the stipulated time, and he brought an oblong envelope with him, containing the security he had offered to hypothecate.

Nat looked the stock over carefully, and finding that it was all right, he handed the broker the money.

That formality done with, the broker took his leave.

Next morning the market took on a bad slump.

All stocks went down in value, Midland Central dropping to 32.

Next day the bears continued to slaughter prices, and Midland Central suffered a further decline of 28 by noon.

Nat sent a note to Green by Andy, stating that he must have a larger margin of security, or under the ruling of the Exchange he might have to sell the Midland Central shares in order to protect himself.

Green came up and told Nat that he had no other security to offer.

"Don't sell the stock if it goes to 25. I'll return you the \$50,000 at the appointed time and take back the shares."

"All right," replied Nat; "I'll take your word for it."

That night being Friday, he kept his appointment to call on Eunice Bond at her home.

She received him in her prettiest gown, and Nat thought she looked more charming than ever.

She and her mother, together with a younger brother and sister, lived in a modest, but comfortable, flat in Harlem, not far from 125th Street.

The little broker found Mrs. Bond, a motherly-looking woman of perhaps forty-five years, afflicted with chronic rheumatism.

She was very gracious to Nat, thanking him in a feeling way for having saved her daughter Eunice from being run down by the fire-engine.

The boy spent a very pleasant evening, and received a warm invitation to call soon again, which he promised to do.

Next morning the market continued weak, and Midland Central closed at noon at 28.

On Monday things looked a little better, and prices were improved all along the line until near closing time, when a fresh slump set in.

Nat discovered that a determined effort was being made against Midland Central by a big clique.

However, as long as he had Broker Green's word that he would take up the loan at the end of the seven days he felt that he had no cause to worry about the value of his security.

The money was due at three o'clock on Wednesday, at which time Midland Central was down to 20.

Green, instead of showing up, sent word to Nat that he was unable to pay up, and advised the boy to sell the stock before it went any lower.

"I think that's pretty cool," thought the little broker. "He told me not to sell the stock even if it got down to 25, as he would make everything all right; now when the price has dropped to 20 he advises me to sell to protect myself, but says nothing about reimbursing me for any loss I might suffer. I guess I'll have to go downstairs and refresh his memory."

So Nat put on his hat and visited Mr. Green in his office.

"I received a note from you, Mr. Green, which I don't quite understand," he said, when he was seated beside the trader.

"Didn't I write it plainly enough?" asked the broker.

"You wrote it plainly enough, but I don't understand it, for all that."

"So you came downstairs to to be enlightened, eh?"

"That's about the size of it, sir."

"Well, tell me what you don't understand about the note."

"The note advises me to sell the Midland Central shares which I hold as security for the loan of \$50,000 I made you a week ago."

The broker nodded.

"I suppose you are aware that M. C. is selling to-day at 20."

"I am."

"That's five points below the figure that would cancel your debt."

"You should have sold before the price got so low."

"You forget that when I called on you for additional margin you told me not to sell even if the price of M. C. went as low as 25."

"I told you that?" replied Green, with a well simulated surprise. "You must be dreaming!"

"Do you mean to tell me that you didn't say so in my office?" cried Nat, indignantly.

"Never said such a thing. I simply told you that I could not put up any more security, and I expected that you would dispose of the stock to secure yourself. The rules allow you to sell the security for a loan whenever it is necessary to do so in order to protect your right. You ought to know the custom of the Street."

"When a broker personally requests me not to take advantage of the rules and at the same time gives me his word to make the matter all right, I respect his wishes."

"But I didn't tell you any such thing."

"You insist on that, do you, Mr. Green?"

"Most certainly."

"Then you wish me to sell M. C. at 20, or whatever it will be in the morning?"

"I don't care what you do with it. It's your property now, as I am obliged to default in my payment of the loan."

"If I sell at 20 that will show a loss of something more than \$10,000. I suppose you mean to make good that amount in order to square your debt?"

"No, sir; I intend to make good nothing. You should have sold M. C. in time to recoup yourself."

"Then you mean that I am to suffer the loss?"

"It isn't my fault if you didn't protect yourself as you had a right to do at the proper time."

"All right, Mr. Green, I won't argue the matter further," replied Nat, rising with some dignity. "If you ever need a loan in the future don't call on me to help you out. I can't afford to do business with any man whose word is so flexible as yours appears to be. Good-afternoon."

Thus speaking, the little broker walked out of his office and returned to his own.

CHAPTER V.

THE LITTLE BROKER GETS A TIP FROM EUNICE BOND.

However the news got out it was impossible to say, but it was soon known through Wall Street that Nat Noble had caught a well-known broker on an option to the tune of \$50,000, and had also cleaned up \$100,000 in the late A. & C. boom.

The result was the little broker was congratulated on all sides, both by his real friends who wished him well, and by those who pretended to be his friends, but hoped to strip him of some of his newly made fleece at the first opportunity.

As Nat was a genial and interesting boy to talk to, many brokers got the habit of dropping in at his office when they had an hour or so to spare.

Nearly all of his visitors had an axe to grind, and they hoped to make Nat turn the handle—that is, they had blocks of more or less worthless or slow-selling securities they wanted to get rid of, and they tried to unload their holdings on the little broker.

Nat, however, wasn't biting at such bait.

He was acquainted with the real value of all the stocks on the market and nobody could fool him worth a cent.

The traders soon found out that he was not an easy mark, but they did not give up hope of catching him off his guard some time.

Nat said nothing to any one, not even his uncle, about the shabby trick Broker Green had played upon him.

He might have made things warm for the trader if he had had a mind to, but he decided to take his revenge some other way.

He hoped to get back at Green in a legitimate way some time, and was willing to bide his time, even if it took years.

In the meantime he avoided contact with the faithless trader.

He placed the 2,000 shares of Midland Central away in his safe and let them lie there, trusting to luck that the value of the stock would pick up after the bears and the adverse conditions surrounding the road let up a bit.

Broker Green expected that Nat would accuse him of

trickery, and had prepared a stout defense to meet the attack; but as days went by and he heard nothing about the matter, he was somewhat surprised, though nevertheless pleased, at his immunity from criticism.

He judged that Nat, realizing that he could not prove anything against him, had let the matter go by default and stood his loss like a little man.

After a time Green began to feel ashamed of his conduct, but as the deed could not be recalled, even if he wished to do so, he dismissed the affair from his mind.

One morning when Nat was sitting alone in his office a messenger boy came into the outer room and asked for him.

He was a little, fat messenger, about fourteen years old, and looked like a kind of animated plum pudding.

He had a comical face that tickled Andy Moore's risibilities.

"So it's Mister Noble ye want to see, is it?" he asked the boy.

"That's what," grinned the messenger.

"What do ye want to see him about?"

"That's my business," replied the visitor, in a saucy tone.

"Faith, it's mighty independent ye are for a little apple dumplin'."

"Who are you calling an apple dumpling? you red-headed Mick!"

"Red-headed Mick, is it?" cried Andy, waxing wroth. "If ye wasn't such a hop-o'-me-thumb I'd make ye ate your words, so I would!"

"Aw, forget it," grinned the messenger. "Say, why don't you dye your hair green?"

"Dye me hair green!" roared Andy, angrily.

"Sure! With that green necktie you have on, it's red above the green, which is against the law for an Irish kid."

"I s'pose ye think that's funny," replied Andy, with a look of disgust.

"Are you going to tell your boss I want to see him?"

"What's your name and where do ye come from?"

"My name is Clarence Fitzherbert Montmorency Scott, and I came from Miss Eunice Bond's typewriter factory. Catch on?"

"Howly smoke! Clarence Fitz—what?"

"Not Fitzwhat, but Fitzherbert. Sorry I haven't got a card, but I'm all out at present. Come, now, mosey! I can't stay here all day."

"Well, upon me word, it's foolin' me I think ye are! Take a sate and I'll till Mr. Noble ye are wantin' to see him."

"Where'll I take it to?" asked the messenger.

"Whot's thot?"

"I ain't saying anything. You're doing all the talking," grinned the boy.

"Faith, I think you're doin' your share, considerin' the size of ye."

"Aw, get a move on—23 for you!"

"It's to be hoped ye won't be after comin' here often, for I might forget meself and take ye for a football."

With these words Andy knocked on the door of Nat's sanctum.

"Come in," said the little broker.

"There's a b'y outside, wid a name a yard long, says he wants to see ye, sor," said Andy, respectfully, after entering.

"What do you mean by a name a yard long, Andy?" asked Nat, somewhat mystified.

"Sure, it's thot long thot I can't remimber it all, sor. It's Clarence Fitzsomebody Mont—the ould b'y shoot me if I can think of the rist," said Andy, scratching his red shock-head.

"Send him in."

"Yis, sor."

In another moment the messenger entered the room.

"A note from Miss Eunice Bond," said the lad, laying it on the little broker's desk.

"Are you Miss Bond's messenger?" asked Nat, stifling a smile at the lad's rotund appearance.

"Yes, sir."

"What's your name?"

"Clarence Scott."

"Is that all?"

"Yes, sir."

"My boy Andy said your name was a yard long. He tried to tell me that it was Clarence Fitzsomething Mont, and said he couldn't remember the rest of it."

The small messenger grinned.

"I was just stringing him, sir, because he called me an apple dumpling."

"Your mustn't mind Andy," smiled Nat, opening the note.

It ran thus:

"Dear Mr. Noble—I've just found out that the O. & B. Railroad has acquired control of the R. & P. line, known as the Huckleberry Road. My information indicates that the stock of the latter road will increase in value very shortly. Thinking the tip may be of service to you, it gives me great pleasure to send it to you. Hoping that you may be able to make something out of it, I remain,

"Yours, very sincerely, EUNICE BOND."

Nat wondered how the girl had gotten hold of the pointer, which appeared to be a valuable one.

He was delighted to think that she took interest enough in him to send him word about it.

He had read in the papers a good deal about the negotiations which were said to be under way by the O. & B. to acquire control of the R. & P., but nothing definite so far had come out about the matter.

According to Eunice's note, the deal was now an established fact, and if it really was so, Nat knew that the stock of the R. & P., which had been in the dumps for some time, was bound to go up with a rush.

It was selling now around 40, but it might be considered a certainty of going above 50 if the O. & B. people got possession of the line.

At any rate, Nat thought the tip a good one.

He dashed off a note of thanks to Miss Bond, enclosed it in an envelope and handed it to Clarence Scott to carry back.

"Ta-ta, Andy," said the fat messenger, as he crossed the reception-room to the corridor door. "Don't forget to have your block dyed, and if I was you I'd get that brogue of yours filed down, or hire yourself out as a barker for a dime museum on the Bowery."

"Be me sowl, I think it's a foine freak ye'd make your-

self for a museum! Sure, ye don't nade to take the iletator. All ye nade do is to roll down, and ye'll reach the strate quicker."

The last sentence was lost in the slam of the door as Clarence passed outside.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LITTLE BROKER GOES INTO R. & P.

Nat put on his hat and went over to see his uncle.

"Say, Uncle Sylvester, there's a good deal in the papers off and on about the O. & B. line getting control of the R. & P. Do you think it will go through?"

"I have an idea that it may."

"It would send the price of the R. & P. up ten or fifteen points, don't you think?"

"I think there's no doubt about that."

"Have you bought any R. & P. at the present figures in anticipation of the deal going through?"

"No, because I don't think the matter will eventuate for some time yet."

"What makes you think it won't?"

"The people who control the R. & P. at present are not eager to step down and out. I have that from good authority."

"But the road isn't paying as an independent line."

"The chief stockholders are wealthy men and can afford to do without dividends. They are probably satisfied as long as the road can meet its interest charges and running expenses. That isn't the only road that isn't paying dividends on its stock."

"I've got money to bet that the O. & B. will be operating the R. & P. inside of thirty days," replied Nat, confidently.

"Somebody been giving you a tip?" asked his uncle, eyeing him sharply.

"Possibly," grinned Nat.

"How did you come to get it?"

"That's a secret, Uncle Sylvester."

"Look out, young man, that there isn't a job behind the pointer. You're known to have made a good deal of money out of A. & C. There are many brokers who would be glad to help you spend a portion of it. From a business standpoint every man's hand is against his brother in Wall Street. You've got to keep your eyes wide open and your wits about you all the time to avoid trouble."

"Do you know anybody who has any R. & P. for sale?"

"No, I don't," replied his uncle, shortly.

"You don't take much stock in my tip, I see."

"It looks suspicious to me."

"All right, uncle. I guess I'll be going," said Nat, rising and making for the door.

"Don't forget, young man, that there is more than one broker who is trying to size up your little pile with a view of getting legal possession of it if he can. You're young at the game and the boys look on you as a fair mark for their shrewdness. I don't want to hear that you've been taken in on R. & P. or any other stock on the list."

"You've been taken in yourself more than once," replied Nat, from the door.

"That's true enough. For that very reason I warn you

to be careful. Don't let your recent success run away with your judgment. Don't fool yourself with the idea that because you fooled Keating, you're as smart as any man down here. When an old stager like Keating slips up on a deal it ought to be a lesson to you to be twice as careful as you ever were before. I've known people to be so busy setting a trap for another man's pile that they didn't see the traps spread by others for themselves, and the first thing they knew they got a jolt that took all the enthusiasm out of them."

"I'll admit there's a whole lot of truth in that, uncle; but, nevertheless, I expect to make several millions in Wall Street if I live long enough."

Sylvester Noble grunted as he turned to his desk, and Nat closed the door and left the office.

He then went upstairs and interviewed Eunice about the tip.

"I can't tell you how I got hold of it, Mr. Noble," she said; "but you may rely on it as a sure thing. I wouldn't have sent it to you if I had any doubt about it being a fact."

"Haven't you a little money to back it with yourself?" he asked her.

"I wish I could afford to," she said, earnestly.

"Well, if I use the pointer I'll give you five per cent. of any profit I make out of it. You're entitled to some recognition if the tip proves to be all you represent it."

"Thank you, Mr. Noble; but I don't ask you to pay me for it. You saved my life and I want to make you some return for that great favor."

"That's all right, Miss Eunice, but I wouldn't think of reaping benefit from a tip you sent me without making some fitting acknowledgment in return."

"Well," she answered, with an arch glance in his face, "I suppose I cannot refuse if you insist on presenting me with something, but I'd rather have you use the tip without giving me any compensation."

"We won't quarrel over it, Miss Eunice. We won't say anything more until we see if we hatch any chickens out. Then it will be time to consider the matter."

After a little further talk on other subjects Nat returned to his office.

There was a letter awaiting him which had been delivered by the carrier.

It was from a man who had seen his advertisement in one of the financial papers.

He wanted some information about the market, and as to the advisability of taking a flyer at that time.

Nat wrote him a reply, and had just put a stamp on the envelope, when a visitor was announced by Andy.

It proved to be Broker Gummett.

"Well, how are things coming with you, Noble?" he asked, after taking a seat.

"I have no complaint to make."

"I should think not," replied the trader. "I understand you made quite a tidy wad out of A. & C."

"I made a few dollars; but that is ancient history now."

"Just so. Do you smoke?" asked the broker, tendering him his cigar-case.

"No, I do not. Much obliged just the same."

"Nor drink, either, I suppose?"

"No, sir. I don't think it's good for boys, nor for men, either, for that matter."

"Just the same, there are few brokers who don't drink more or less. You see, the excitement of the Exchange is often racking on a man's nerves, and he feels in need of a bracer to steady himself after the day's hustle."

"I don't believe a man up to thirty-five or forty needs stimulants to carry him through a day's campaign unless he isn't naturally vigorous, and a weak man ought to go into some less exciting business."

"You won't find many of the boys who'll agree with you, Morrison—you know him—takes on an average a dozen mint juleps a day, and he's barely thirty. He told me that he couldn't do business unless he was primed up."

"He's foolish. It's a habit with him. I'll bet he'll be a wreck both financially and physically one of these days."

"Well, to change the subject, are you buying anything?"

"I'm open for offers in R. & P. shares. Got any?"

"Yes. A customer left a couple of thousand with me this afternoon. I'll let you have them at 40 1-8."

"How does 40 strike you?" asked Nat.

"If you'll take the bunch you can have the stock for 40."

"It's a go, Mr. Gummett. I'll bring the cash around in the morning and relieve you of the certificates."

"All right," said the broker, as they exchanged memorandums, in a tone of satisfaction, for R. & P. was not a very active stock. "Do you want any more of the same? If you do I know where I can get it."

"If you'll buy me 10,000 shares on margin I'll make the deal," said Nat.

"Ten thousand!" said Gummett, with a whistle. "Trying to corner the stock?" he added, with a laugh.

"Hardly; but I can use that number of shares."

Gummett wondered if Nat was buying the stock for himself or a customer.

He guessed the 2,000 were for himself, and the larger number for a customer, as it appeared to him to be two different deals, seeing that Nat was buying one lot outright and the other on margin.

It also indicated that the little broker did not have enough cash to handle the 10,000 shares himself.

Nat promised to bring the margin of \$40,000 around in the morning with the \$80,000 for the 2,000 shares.

This was perfectly satisfactory to Broker Gummett, and the deal was put through.

Next morning Nat appeared promptly on time at Mr. Gummett's office, and paid him the money, receiving the certificates for the 2,000 shares.

Broker Gummett then went out to get the 10,000 shares, which he anticipated getting as easy as rolling off a log.

After picking up the first 3,000 from Keating, who he knew had the shares, he found, much to his surprise, that R. & P. was rather scarce.

He got the balance, however, by one o'clock, and then notified Nat that he held the shares subject to his order.

In the meantime Nat was hunting for some more himself, but the best he could do was 2,000, at 41.

That confirmed his confidence in the value of Eunice's tip, for it was only a week before that R. & P. could be gotten in any quantity, and its scarceness showed that unknown parties had been buying up the stock right and left.

That afternoon after the Exchange closed he called on Miss Bond and told her he had put almost every cent he had in R. & P.

"Leaving out the 14,000 shares I now control, it looks as if the people wise to the consolidation of the O. & B. and R. & P. interests have bought up all the stock in sight. I stand to win a big boodle this trip or go pretty near broke."

"Oh, you'll win," she said, confidently.

"Well, if I win, Miss Eunice, you'll come pretty near clearing \$10,000 yourself."

"Ten thousand dollars!" almost gasped the girl. "Why, that is a fortune!"

"Not in Wall Street. But I guess it will put you on Easy Street if it comes your way, and it will give me great pleasure to hand it to you."

Eunice couldn't realize that she stood a chance of making so much money.

"You'll get it, all right, if the tip is a winner," said Nat, wishing her good-bye.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LITTLE BROKER CLEARS OVER A QUARTER OF A MILLION ON R. & P.

As soon as Gummett had filled Nat's order he decided that, from the scarceness of the stock, it was being cornered by some pool of traders with the view to a boom, consequently he thought it would be good policy to get some himself.

He had been compelled to hypothecate the 10,000 shares he got for Nat, as the deal involved a matter of \$400,000, and he did not have that much money on tap.

He spent the whole of the next day looking for R. & P., and only succeeded in securing 1,500 shares, for which he had to pay 41 5-8.

Then he tried to get it on the Exchange, offering 42.

He got 500 more at 42 3-8, and that seemed to be all there was in sight.

The efforts of several other brokers to get some of it sent the price to 44 before the Exchange closed for the day.

Next morning it opened at 44 3-8, and by noon offers of 46 brought very little of the stock to the surface.

It was now generally known in the Street that the stock had been withdrawn from circulation, and considerable excitement ensued around the R. & P. standard.

All sorts of rumors were afloat to account for its scarceness, opinion being divided as to whether the long-talked-of consolidation had gone through, or a combine had been formed to boom the price by cornering the shares.

At any rate, there was a larger demand for the stock than there had been in months, and it went up to 48 that day.

Now that the price had gone up eight points, in a few days the brokers began to scramble for it, and that sent it up still higher.

Broker Green had several orders for it from his customers, which he couldn't fill, and he mentioned the fact to Gummett over at the Exchange.

"I can tell you who has some of the stock. At any rate, he had 2,000 shares a few days ago."

"Who?" asked Green.

"Nat Noble, the little broker in your building."

"Huh!" snorted Green.

"Better call on him. If he has the stock yet you may be able to make terms with him."

Green, however, knew better than to call on the little broker after what had passed between them.

But, as he wanted the stock badly, he induced another broker to go to Nat's office and see if he could get any of it.

The boy was in when he called.

"Well, sor, what name shall I take in to Mr. Noble?" asked Andy.

"Tell him Mr. Gunn."

"Take a sate, Mr. Gunn, and I'll till him thot ye want to say him."

Broker Gunn was admitted.

"I understand that you have some shares of R. & P. stock," said the trader, after he had introduced himself.

"Who told you that I had some of it?" asked the little broker.

Mr. Gunn was puzzled how to answer this question, as Mr. Green had cautioned him not to mention his name.

"I don't remember who did tell me. Somebody over at the Exchange," he replied, evasively.

"Well, I've got a few shares," said Nat. "What are you offering for it?"

"What do you want for it; and how much have you for sale?"

"I'll sell 2,000 shares at 60," replied the boy.

"At 60? Why, the market price a few minutes ago was a fraction above 48! Why do you ask 60?"

"Because I expect to get that for it in a few days."

"You do? I never remember seeing R. & P. much above 50, even in its best days, and that was years ago."

"Well, you're liable to see it up to 60, and even over, before many days."

"What do you base your idea on?" almost sneered Broker Gunn.

"The fact that the stock is very scarce, for one thing," replied Nat.

"Humph! I guess we can't trade at any such preposterous figure as you want."

"All right, Mr. Gunn. There is no harm done. You might call on Mr. Gummett and see if he has any of the stock. I don't know that he has any, but it is possible that he may have."

"Mr. Frinch would loike to say ye, sor," said Andy, poking his head into the room.

"Tell him to come in," and Mr. French presently appeared.

"I hear you have some R. & P. stock, Noble," he said.

"He has some," interjected Gunn; "but he wants a prohibitive price for it."

"What are you asking, Noble?" asked Broker French.

"Sixty."

French whistled.

"You're joking, aren't you?" he said.

"No, sir. Sixty is my price."

"You've got a pretty good nerve, I must say."

"Nerve is a good thing to have."

"A person can have too much of it sometimes."

"Think so, Mr. French?"

"I do. Permit me to say that you do not seem to be

overburdened with modesty. Why in thunder are you asking more than a ten-point advance on the market price?"

"Mr. Gunn, who wants to buy some of the same stock, asked me the same question just now."

"What answer did you give him?"

"I told him I expected to get 60 in a few days."

"I'm afraid your expectations will not materialize."

"I'm willing to take my chances on it."

"And I'm willing you should, Noble," laughed French.

"I'm not paying more than 50 for that stock."

"If you get it at 50 you'll get a good thing. I'd advise you to freeze on to every share that comes your way at that figure."

"You talk as if you were a member of a pool that was booming it," said French. "Has anybody been tipping you off about R. & P.?"

"You don't expect me to answer that question, do you, Mr. French?" said Nat.

The broker laughed, and locking arms with Mr. Gunn, the two traders walked out of the boy's office.

"It's my opinion they'll have a healthy time finding any R. & P. at 50," said Nat to himself. "Under the present condition of the market people who have any of that stock are likely to hold on to it. That's what I'm going to do. It may not go to 60 after all, but I've a pretty shrewd notion that it will get within hailing distance of it, at any rate."

Next morning R. & P. opened at 52.

A few shares came out at that figure, and were gobbled up quicker than a flash of Jersey lightning.

It was evident that the holders of nine-tenths of the stock were not eager to sell out.

By noon 56 was being offered for the stock, without any great result.

Nat dropped in to see his uncle that afternoon.

"Well, Uncle Sylvester, what do you think of R. & P.?"

"I think it's being boomed by a elique."

"That's where you're wrong."

"How do you know I'm wrong?" asked his uncle, sharply.

"That tip I got on it indicated something different."

"What did it indicate?" asked the big broker, curiously.

"The taking over of the road by the O. & B."

"No such announcement has been made as yet."

"It will be before long."

"Did you buy any of the stock?"

"I put up all the money I had on it. I bought 2,000 shares outright at 40; 10,000 more on margin at the same price, and 2,000 additional at 41. At the present market price I'm over \$200,000 ahead of the game. I guess I'm doing pretty well for a new broker," he said, complacently.

Sylvester Noble regarded his nephew with surprise and interest.

The boy was certainly making things hum.

"You seem to be making a record for yourself, young man; but you'll not be out of the wood until you've sold your shares. How high do you expect the stock to go?"

"I mean to hold on for 60."

"It's 56 5-8 now," said Sylvester Noble, looking at the tape at his elbow. "I suppose you wouldn't let me have a couple of thousand of your shares for 57?"

"You suppose wrong, uncle. If you want 2,000 shares you can have them at 56 5-8, the market price."

"No, I'll give you 57."

"The stock is yours. I'll send the certificates over by my boy."

Sylvester Noble wrote out and handed Nat his check for \$114,000, which gave the little broker a profit on that bunch of \$34,000.

Nat stopped in at the Exchange on his way back just in time to hear the official announcement of the taking over of the R. & P. road by the O. & B. system.

In five minutes the price was up to 60.

At that figure Nat ordered his other block of 2,000 shares, which he was holding on margin, to be disposed of, which added \$37,500 more to his profits.

An hour before the Exchange closed R. & P. had reached 62.

As Nat saw that a whole lot of stock was coming out now which would have a tendency to depress the price, he hurried over to Mr. Gummett's office and told that broker to get rid of his 10,000 shares in small lots at the market.

Before the chairman's gavel closed the Exchange at three o'clock, Nat was out of the race with a profit, all told, of \$278,000 on the deal.

Five per cent. of this amount, or \$13,900, he set aside for Eunice Bond, as her share of the transaction.

Then he figured up his total capital at \$434,000 in round numbers.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LITTLE BROKER GETS A TIP THAT PROVES TO BE A TRAP.

As soon as he had effected a settlement with Mr. Gummett and his other broker, Nat took his statements and the sum of \$13,900 in cash to Eunice Bond's office to show her the result of his deal made on the strength of her tip.

When he handed her the money to which she was entitled by the terms he had made with her, she could hardly believe her eyes.

She felt just as if she had come into an unexpected legacy.

"I really don't know how to thank you, Mr. Noble, for this generosity on your part. It really seems like too much money for you to give me."

"Too much, Miss Eunice? Why, it is only five per cent. of my own winnings! Just consider that I have made nineteen times as much as you. At any rate, I'm satisfied, so I think you ought to be."

"I am more than satisfied, and I am awfully obliged to you."

"You're not half as much obliged to me as I am to you. If you hadn't sent me that tip I shouldn't have been able to make over a quarter of a million, as I have just done."

"And you have actually made as much as that?" she cried, regarding him as if he were a veritable money king.

"After deducting your five per cent. and all commissions and interest charges, I have cleared just \$264,000. That's \$14,000 more than a quarter of a million."

"I'm awfully glad," she replied in a tone that showed she meant it.

"Well, I'd be more glad if I thought the time would ever come when you would have a half interest in all I made," he said, boldly.

Eunice blushed scarlet at what was equivalent almost to a proposal.

"Is there any chance of that ever happening, Eunice?" he said, for the first time omitting the "Miss."

The girl turned away in evident embarrassment.

"I beg your pardon," said Nat, feeling as if he had put his foot in it. "I haven't offended you, have I?" he added, earnestly.

"No," she replied, softly, after a moment's pause.

"May—may I hope?" he said, taking her hand.

She did not answer, but at the same time she did not withdraw her hand, and that encouraged him.

He was about to press his advantage when the door opened and the four typewriters who had been out to lunch together came trooping into the office.

Eunice hastily snatched her hand away from him and began arranging some work on her desk in a confused and aimless fashion.

"May I call on you Sunday evening?" he asked her.

"Yes," she replied, with a glance which entranced him.

He then bade her good-bye and walked out.

"I'll win her yet," he said to himself, as he started for the elevator. "I wouldn't lose her for a gold mine. No, not for all the gold mines of Nevada."

Nat was feeling pretty good when he entered his office.

He was rather surprised, however, at the sight that met his eyes.

On the floor lay a big A. D. T. messenger, and on top of him roosted Andy, as mad as a March hare.

"Now, thin, are ye goin' to ate your words?" roared Andy. "If ye don't I'll bate the ould boy's tattoo on your face, so I will. Am I a red-headed Mick?"

"No," groaned the boy on the floor.

"Am I a gintleman?"

"Yes, yes."

"Thin whot do ye mane by callin' me out of me name?"

"It was only fun."

"Only fun, is it? Will ye do it ag'in?"

"No."

"Ye are sure of thot?"

"Yes. Let me up."

"Ye are sure ye can't lick me with one hand—nor two, aither, for thot matter—are ye?"

"Yes."

"What's the trouble, Andy?" asked Nat, repressing a smile. "Let the boy up."

"Yis, sor," and Andy dismounted from the messenger's chest. "He insulted me, sor, and I forgot mesilf and gave him a lambastin'."

The district messenger looked confused and sheepish.

Andy picked up a yellow envelope that lay on the floor and handed it to Nat.

"Thot's for ye, sor. This b'y brought it, and if he'd behaved himsilf, sor, there would have been no trouble. He insulted me and the ould dart, and I forgot mesilf. I hope ye won't discharge me, sor, for takin' the law into me own hands."

"Take your seat, Andy, and you can explain later," said Nat.

The little broker opened the envelope and read the message.

It ran thus:

"Dear Henry—The name of the stock that will be boomed by the syndicate is D. & H. Load up without delay, as the pool has brokers out buying it up on the quiet. Get it at once, as to-morrow may be too late.

"Yours, F. F."

Nat was astonished at the contents of the note.

Evidently it was not intended for him.

He turned the envelope over and looked at the superscription.

It was plainly addressed to "Nat Noble, Broker, Niobe Building."

A moment's reflection convinced the little broker that it was a case of mixed notes.

"F. F." had probably written two notes, one of which Nat argued was intended for him, and then after addressing the two envelopes had put each of the notes into the wrong one and sent them off.

"This note isn't intended for me, though it came in an envelope addressed to me," he said to the messenger. "Who gave it to you to bring here?"

"A broker by the name of French," replied the boy.

"Frank French. I know him. Well, you'll have to take it back to him and tell him the note meant for me must have gone to the person for whom this note is intended. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Wait a moment. I'll enclose it in one of my envelopes with the explanation."

Nat wrote a few words on a pad and enclosed it with the envelope and contents in one of his envelopes and handed it to the boy, who went off with it.

"It seems I've accidentally got hold of a good tip not meant for my eyes. Of course it wouldn't be fair for me to take advantage of the circumstance, although I dare say there are people who would use it on the principle that all's fair in Wall Street. However, I'm not built that way."

He then dismissed the matter from his mind.

He expected to receive a hurried visit from Trader French, but the broker did not call.

In an hour or so he noticed that D. & H. was advancing slowly in price.

By two o'clock that day it had gone up three points.

Nat made no attempt to buy any of the stock, but sat in his office reading the financial news in the latest Wall Street journals.

At quarter past three a visitor was announced by Andy.

He gave his name as Titus Waterbury, and was a stranger to the little broker.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Waterbury?" asked Nat.

"I've got 5,000 shares of stock I'd like to sell," said the caller.

"What is the name of the stock?"

"Delaware & Hudson. It's gone up three points, and I'd like to dispose of it. It was left to me a few months ago by my uncle. I'm going out to Chicago by the seven o'clock train. If you would take it off my hands I'd sell it for 60, that's one point below the market."

"I don't care to buy the stock outright. I'll sell it for you to-morrow, and remit the money to you. Or, if you'll leave it with me and return in an hour I'll see if I can dispose of it to some broker."

"Why can't you buy it in yourself, and make the one per cent.? It's good stock and may go higher to-morrow."

"No," replied Nat, "I'm not buying any stock outright at present."

The man looked disappointed.

"If you won't take it," he said, "I'll have to visit another broker."

"Well, you are the doctor," replied the boy.

Accordingly the visitor got up, said good-day and left.

Nat thought he'd go over and see his uncle on a little matter of business, so he put on his hat and went out.

As he stepped out of the elevator and made for the entrance of the building he saw his late visitor standing in the vestibule talking to Broker French.

"Wouldn't he buy the stock?" he heard French say, as he brushed past them.

"No. He offered to sell it for me."

"Didn't he show any eagerness at all about the matter?"

"Not a bit."

That's all Nat heard, and it set him to thinking.

It began to look to him as if French had sent Mr. Waterbury to his office for the purpose of selling him the 5,000 shares of D. & H.

Why should he do that?

Why, indeed, unless there was some kind of a trap back of it?

Then he thought about the note that had come to him by an apparent mistake, and which contained a tip about D. & H.

Was the whole matter a put-up job to unload the D. & H. shares on him at the advanced price?

It looked very like it to Nat.

So much so, in fact, that he told the circumstance to his uncle when he reached his office.

"It was a trap," said Sylvester Noble, unhesitatingly. "The price of D. & H. was no doubt advanced by sundry wash sales at the Exchange, and then French sent the 5,000 shares to you by that man, thinking that the tip he had previously got to your notice would cause you to snap the stock up. It was a shrewd game, but it seems it didn't work out the way that French expected. You'll find that D. & H. will be back to 58 in the morning. This is only a sample of what you may expect to be up against. The boys are looking for your bank account, and it's up to you to protect yourself. There are tricks worked down here that would make the sleight-of-hand of Bret Harte's 'Heathen Chinee' look like thirty cents."

Nat said he guessed his uncle was right, and they had a quiet laugh over Broker French's failure to make the raffle.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LITTLE BROKER TRIES HIS HAND AT A TRAP HIMSELF.

Next morning, just as Sylvester Noble had said, D. & H. was back at about 58.

Nat chuckled when he saw the quotation on his ticker.

"It's the wise child that knows when not to bite at a tempting bait," he said to himself. "I wonder what game will be played on me next? I must keep my brains about

me all the time. It's bad enough to lose in the ordinary way, but a fellow feels cheap when he's the victim of a put-up job."

Half an hour later Broker Keating was announced by Andy.

"Good-morning, Mr. Keating," said Nat, cheerfully. "What can I do for you?"

"I called to let you in on a good thing," said the trader, as he seated himself at the little broker's desk.

"Let me in on a good thing? That's an uncommonly liberal proposition, isn't it, Mr. Keating?"

"Well, you see, you're kind of popular in the Street. At any rate, the bunch that's in with me like you a whole lot, and when this pool was proposed Mr. Gummett suggested that we take you in with us."

"Mr. Gummett said that?"

"Yes."

"What's the proposition?"

"A dozen of us have arranged to put in a quarter of a million apiece and corner a certain stock. We expect to make at least half a million each out of the rise."

"What is the stock?"

"Oh, come now, you don't expect me to tell you that until you've agreed to go in."

"I'd like to know what I'm up against before I commit myself."

"That's all right. You can take my word that it's a winner. There's big money in it, as I said."

"A quarter of a million is a whole lot of coin to put up on a game of chance."

"The chances are all in our favor."

"How do you know they are?"

"We've figured the matter out before we decided to go on."

"Who's in this pool?"

"Well, there's Gummett, for one."

"Yes."

"French for another. You know Frank French?"

"Oh, yes, I know him."

"Then Archie Gunn is with us. And Fosdick, Bailey, and—well, you'll meet them all at the meeting at my office this afternoon if you join us. They're all good fellows; and all, like yourself, after the mighty dollar. Shall I put you down for a quarter of a million?"

"No, I don't think I'll go in."

"Why not?"

"I'm rather shy of blind pools."

"Nonsense! This is the chance of your life, Noble."

"I'm not sure about that. When I go into a deal, especially if it's a heavy one, I like to handle my own money."

"In a pool arrangement one man is selected to take charge of the money. You ought to know that. Your uncle must have given you some insight into pools, for he's been in many a one."

"He always advised me to keep out of them unless I knew just where I was at."

"But I assure you this is perfectly safe."

"It is impossible for any one to say that a pool to corner a stock is perfectly safe. There are a hundred things liable to turn up to upset the best of calculations. I prefer to go it alone."

"If you turn the boys down you may not get another

chance like this in a hurry. You'll find this is just like picking up money."

Nat, however, would not fall in with Keating's views, and the broker left evidently much disappointed.

"Keating seemed terribly anxious to put half a million in my pocket," said Nat to himself, when alone. "I don't fancy such liberality on his part. He's got it in for me for doing him up on that option on A. & C. some time ago. I'll bet this proposition of his covers some nice little trap to make me part with some of my hard-earned fleece. I wonder what his game was?"

A day or two later Nat discovered from the visitors' gallery of the Exchange that Keating and French were busily engaged in buying from different traders on the floor.

He watched them for some time, and then he made up his mind to find out just what stock they were after.

He sent a young broker he was on good terms with to find out for him.

The broker came back after a little while and told him that Keating and French were loading up with L. & M.

"Thanks," replied the little broker, "that's all I wanted to know."

L. & M. was ruling around 63.

Nat went to his uncle and told him that he wanted to get 30,000 shares of L. & M. if he could on a ten per cent. margin.

"Thirty thousand shares, eh?"

"Yes. Keating and French are buying in whole blocks of it, and I want to get as much of it as I can to put a kink in their efforts to corner it, for that, in my opinion, is what they are trying to do."

His uncle took the order and sent a couple of his brokers out to get the shares, at the same time notifying the broker who represented him on the Exchange to buy it in on the quiet.

After Sylvester Noble had gotten 20,000 shares his brokers began to find it difficult to locate any more.

They finally succeeded in getting the other 10,000 inside of a couple of days.

The first few thousand shares Nat got for about 63, but the rest he had to pay various prices for up to 67.

Altogether the stock averaged the little broker 65.

As soon as Nat got his order filled he began to watch the stock closely.

On the following day it went to 68.

He soon heard rumors of a consolidation of a rival road with L. & M.

As soon as the news got circulated around the Street many brokers started to look for the stock.

They couldn't find any.

Then they began bidding for it above the market and that sent the price up to 70 in no time at all.

Attention now being attracted to the scarceness of the stock, the traders began to suspect that a syndicate had cornered it, and they made frantic efforts to find some of the stock that had not yet been secured by the insiders.

Very little was to be had even when the price went up to 75.

When Nat dropped in to see his uncle that afternoon the old man asked him when he was going to sell.

"I'm in no hurry," replied Nat, confidently.

"You stand to win \$300,000 now. Isn't that enough for you?"

"It will be worth more to-morrow."

"How do you know that it will? The bottom may drop out before then."

"I'm not afraid that it will."

"I'm afraid you're getting reckless, young man," said his uncle, severely. "If you're calculating on holding on for the last dollar you're liable to come out at the small end of the horn."

"Don't you worry about me, Uncle Sylvester," replied the little broker, coolly.

"Well, it's up to you. Don't say I haven't warned you. That report about a consolidation is a fake. As soon as it is officially denied the price will drop."

"Keating and French won't let it drop, for they and their crowd are loaded up to their necks with the stock. They've got it cornered, in their opinion, but I'm going to make them take in my shares or go to the wall."

"I see what your game is, but look out that you don't catch yourself. It takes an old bird to get rid of so much stock without disturbing the market."

"Well, you're an old bird, aren't you? I'll let you get rid of it for me when I give the word."

"You're might complimentary, you young dog," chuckled Sylvester Noble. "However, I'll take my revenge on you when we settle up commissions and interest charges. I'll have a bill against you that will make your eyes bulge."

"Yes, I expect so," laughed Nat.

When business closed that day L. & M. was ruling at 78.

On his way back to the office he met Keating and French coming out of the Exchange arm in arm, looking like men thoroughly satisfied with themselves and the world in general.

"Hello, Noble," said Keating; "you missed the chance of your life, as I told you you would, by not going in with us."

"That so?"

"Yes. You're just half a million out because you were too cautious."

"I think it pays a person to be cautious when he's asked to put a quarter of a million into a blind pool."

"That's all right, but caution can be carried too far."

"Well, I'm not kicking."

"That's because you don't realize what you've lost. In a few days we'll be cutting a nice, large and juicy melon."

"I may be cutting a small melon of my own about the same time," returned Nat.

"What are you in on?" asked French, curiously.

"I'm not saying anything just now," laughed the little broker, as he walked off.

CHAPTER X.

THE LITTLE BROKER SPRINGS HIS TRAP AND CATCHES HIS GAME.

Next morning Nat passed Keating and French outside the Exchange.

"It will go to 85 to-day," he heard Keating say.

Nat knew he meant L. & M.

"I think it will do better than that," said French. "There's very little offering now. I guess we've got about all there is on the market."

The little broker grinned and went on to the visitors' gallery.

The Exchange opened amid considerable excitement, for everybody was looking for a further rise in L. & M.

They were not disappointed.

Keating took the center of the stage and began bidding it up a point at a time.

Scarcely any shares were thrown at him.

French and their lieutenants made many wash sales with Keating, and the price continued to advance.

At noon it was roosting at 85.

When it reached 86 Nat thought it was time for him to take a hand in the game.

He went to a telephone and told his uncle to sell two blocks of 5,000 shares each one after the other.

They were naturally offered to Keating first, as he was calling for the stock.

He gobbled up the first 5,000 as a matter of course, but the second, coming right on top of it, rather staggered him.

He bought it, however, and no more coming, he felt easier.

He had to send French out to raise the funds to pay for the shares, as all their available cash was tied up with the stock they had already bought.

Nat saw Keating making for the street door for a breathing spell, so he rushed downstairs to meet him.

"Well, how are things coming, Mr. Keating?" he asked him, when he caught him on the sidewalk outside.

"Tip-top," replied the trader.

"Glad to hear it. I'm doing pretty well myself. I sold two blocks of L. & M. just now, 10,000 shares in all, for 86, which I bought around 65."

"The dickens you did!" cried Keating, staring at him.

"Yes. I hear you're buying it as fast as you can. Do you want some more? I have 10,000 more if you want it, otherwise I'll throw it on the market."

"For Heaven's sake, don't do that! I'll take it," cried Keating, all of a sweat.

The deal was made.

"Where did you get 20,000 shares of L. & M.?" asked the broker, as soon as they had exchanged memorandums.

"Oh, I picked them up around town," replied Nat, coolly.

"I expect to make half a million or more out of the stock."

"Somebody must have tipped you off to the rise. I'd give \$10,000 to know who it was," said Keating, clearly angry and disturbed.

"Nobody tipped me off. I found out myself that you and French were buying all you could get hold of, so I thought I'd have a look-in on a good thing, too."

Keating said something that didn't sound exactly polite.

At that moment French came up, and Keating turned to him and led him aside.

Nat walked down as far as Beaver Street in a leisurely way, feeling uncommonly good, for he had cleared a profit of considerably over \$400,000 so far, and he still had 10,000 shares to sell.

When he got back to the Exchange Keating, French and their lieutenants had arranged to liquidate right away as cautiously as possible, for they were in a tight box, and it

required great skill on their part to unload without disturbing the market.

The little broker sent a note in to Keating telling him he had a few more shares of L. & M. left, and he could have them if he wanted them, otherwise it would be offered to anybody that wanted to buy.

Keating rushed outside to see Nat, for he couldn't afford to let any L. & M. be dumped on the market at that stage of the game.

"I thought you sold me all you had," growled the trader as soon as he came up to Nat.

"No. I have some more."

"How much more?"

"Ten thousand shares."

"Ten thousand what!" roared Keating.

"L. & M."

"I don't believe you!" scowled the trader.

"Don't you? Sorry you doubt my word. Do you want the shares, or don't you?"

Keating fairly gasped and trembled like an aspen leaf.

"My Heaven! I can't take it in. If you throw it on the market you'll ruin the syndicate."

"That isn't my fault," replied Nat.

"Can't I arrange with you to hold off for awhile till we unload enough to pay you?"

"Well, I don't want to bring on a panic and force you to the wall. Take the stock and I'll give you time to pay for it."

"You haven't any more up your sleeve?" asked Keating, suspiciously.

"No. That's all I've got. I'll let you have it at 87."

"I'll take it under your agreement."

The deal was made and Keating, looking like a wreck, rushed back to consult with French.

They were not feeling very grateful to Nat, though the little broker could have swamped them if he had chosen to do so.

By careful management they might be able to save themselves now, but the bulk of their anticipated profits had been gobbled up by the boy broker, and they were furious at the way he had outwitted them.

Nat returned to the visitors' gallery and watched the excitement below.

Knowing the bad shape Keating and his crowd were in he was afraid a slump might set in any minute.

No such thing happened, however, for the astute brokers played their cards so well that they succeeded in unloading their stock so quietly that the price held well.

The Exchange finally closed without any trouble, and then Nat went to his uncle's office to tell him how he had managed his deal.

"You're a bird, young man. How much will you be worth when you've made a settlement through me with Keating and his bunch?"

"Something over a million, uncle."

"Upon my word, if you keep on at this rate you'll be worth more than me!"

"I shouldn't be surprised," returned Nat, coolly.

"You'll have to order a new hat, I'm thinking."

"What for?"

"To fit your head. It looks to me as if it was swelling considerably."

"Don't you believe it. My head will never grow any bigger than it is now."

"I'm not so sure about that. You're putting on more frills than I ever saw you do before."

"You must be getting near-sighted. Better get a new pair of glasses."

"Do you know who you're talking to, young man?" said Sylvester Noble, sharply.

"I'm talking to my Uncle Sylvester, who doesn't seem to appreciate what a smart nephew he has at his elbow," chuckled Nat.

"Humph! Don't imagine because fortune has made you a millionaire so soon that you will always be one. You may get a jolt when you're not looking for it that'll take all the conceit out of you. If you weren't my brother's son——"

"Well, why don't you go on, Uncle Sylvester?"

"I'd like to see you taught a lesson."

"Thanks. I guess I'll be going. Settle with Keating and his crowd on the terms I made with them, and then send me your statement and check. Ta-ta, till I see you again."

Nat walked out of the office as though he owned it, and his uncle looked after him disapprovingly.

"Some fine day he'll get into a bunch of trouble, and then I suppose I'll have to help him out. He thinks that he knows it all. That's the effect of being too confoundedly fortunate all at once. Still, I must admit he's smart. Yes, he's smart, and will in the end make his mark. But he's got a lot to learn. He'll find out by experience that even the shrewdest men in Wall Street sometimes run against snags. So he's a millionaire to-day. I never expected to see him that for years. Let us hope he may be lucky enough to keep it and add to it; but I'm afraid success will make him do something foolish. He's in the humor for that now, I can see. A million is a lot of money, but it can be lost in an hour in Wall Street."

CHAPTER XI.

THE LITTLE BROKER FINDS THAT HE IS CAUGHT IN A TRAP HIMSELF.

The Keating and French crowd carried their deal through to a fairly successful issue, but the roast Nat had given them cut so deep into their profits that they did not feel very charitably disposed toward the little broker.

Keating, who acted as cashier for the pool, settled with Sylvester Noble for the shares he had purchased from Nat, and then the members of the combine divided up what profit was left and closed their business connections.

One and all, before they separated after their final meeting, registered a vow to get square on Nat Noble.

"He must have collared several hundred thousand dollars of our good money," said Keating. "We must get some of that away from him in the near future."

"I'd give a good deal to get even with him," said Broker Green, who was one of the late pool. "If I can think of any good scheme you can gamble on it that I'll put it through."

The day that Nat received his uncle's statement and

check closing up the L. & M. matter, he called on Eunice and told her about his good luck.

"I'm worth a full million and something over, Eunice," he said. "Aren't you glad?"

He called her Eunice now, because on the previous Sunday evening, when he called at her home, he had taken advantage of the chance to press the question that was uppermost in his mind as to whether he might hope that some day she would become very near and dear to him, and she had given him a favorable answer.

"Of course I'm glad, Nat," she said. "Shouldn't I be?"

"I thought you should," he replied. "I'm trying to make money as much for your sake as my own, for I expect some day to acquire the right to spend it on you."

As the typewriters were present, and cast interested glances full of significance in their direction, they had to be cautious in their attitude toward each other.

The girls all envied their employer, for Nat's frequent visits to the office left no doubt in their minds but that he was sweet on Miss Bond, and while they were not aware what a fine catch he was, financially speaking, they all recognized his good looks and gentlemanly address, and were more than half in love with him themselves.

After talking awhile with Eunice, Nat took his leave and started back to his own office.

Nat was gradually getting a number of out-of-town customers who had come to him through his advertisement in the financial journals.

This encouraged him to believe that in the course of time he would have a business worth attending to.

About three weeks after the L. & M. deal a broker named Glenn, whom he knew, came into his office one morning and had a chat with him.

Among other things he casually mentioned that D. & L. was a good stock that would bear watching.

"I like it so well that I'm going to buy a few thousand shares on the chance that it will rise before many days," he said. "The road is instituting many improvements that will add to its earning capacity, and its securities are bound to rise in the market and stay up."

That afternoon a lady came into the office and asked Nat what he would charge to sell 1,000 shares of D. & L.

He told her.

"How long will it take you to sell it?"

"Oh, not very long. It's a very good stock and always commands a ready sale."

"Very well, I'll bring it down to-morrow or next day."

She had been gone only a little while when a broker whom Nat knew by sight called to ask him if he had any D. & L. shares.

"No, I haven't got a share, but a lady was in here a little while ago who has 1,000 shares that she's going to bring down for me to sell for her."

"Well, I'll drop in again to-morrow afternoon about the stock, if I don't pick up all I want between this time and then. I've already been to a score of brokers and can't find a share. Seems to be getting scarce, for some reason."

Mr. Gummatt called just as Nat was getting ready to go home and asked him if he had any of D. & L.

"No, sir. You're the second person who has been in here to-day looking for it."

"It's a good stock to be long in," said Gummatt, con-

fidentially. "If I had the cash I'd load up with it at once, but it takes about all my spare coin to handle my business these days."

Two other brokers he met on the street next morning also spoke well of D. & L.

The lady turned up about eleven in the morning with the 1,000 shares, and Nat bought it of her, paying her \$52,000.

He decided that he would hold on to the stock for a few days to see how things panned out.

When he went out he inquired in several offices if they had any of it on hand, but couldn't find any.

He wondered if the stock was really getting scarce, and made additional inquiries for it.

During the day he saw Broker Gummatt and spoke to him about the stock.

"Yes, it seems to be scarce," replied Gummatt.

"Looks as if it was being bought up, doesn't it?" said Nat.

"Somewhat that way."

"I should like to get 10,000 shares if I could," said Nat.

"Give me your order and I'll see if I can get them," said Gummatt.

Nat gave him the order, raising it to 15,000 shares, or any part thereof.

Half an hour afterward D. & L. suddenly got active on the Exchange and rose to 55.

He received word from Gummatt soon after that he couldn't get the stock much under 56, and was asked for instructions.

Nat sent him word to buy at 56.

An hour later the stock was up to 58.

Gummatt met Nat on the street.

"I was only able to get you 5,000 shares at 55 7-8. It is up to 58 now. You will have to pay that or more for it if you want the balance of your order filled."

"Well, buy it at 58 or 58 1-2."

In due time Gummatt notified Nat that he had secured 5,000 at 58 1-8 and 5,000 at 58 1-2.

He added that he knew where he could get him another 5,000 at the latter price if he bought right away.

Nat sent him word to gather it in.

The stock closed that day at 58 3-4.

Next morning Nat was notified by Gummatt that he had bought the other 5,000 shares, and that he now held 20,000 shares subject to his order.

Nat watched the ticker and saw that the price had dropped to 57 1-2.

Broker Gunn came in about this time and asked the little broker if he had any D. & L.

"I've got some, but I'm holding on to it."

"Do you know where I can get any?" asked Gunn. "It seems to be scarce."

"No, I haven't the least idea."

"Looks as if somebody was trying to corner the stock," said Gunn.

"It will take a lot of money to corner D. & L. successfully, as I understand there was over 100,000 shares sold to the public."

"You forget that it pays a dividend of four per cent. annually on the common stock. Its par value is \$50, and its price is always a little above that. Therefore, a good deal

of it is held by trust companies and others, and will not come on the market."

Shortly after Broker Gunn left, Gummett came in and told Nat that he had heard that Green, in that building, had some D. & L.

"I haven't been able to see him this morning and couldn't say for certain that he has any, but you might drop in and see him about the matter if you want any more."

"I don't care to do business with Mr. Green," replied Nat, shortly.

"No?" replied Gummett, in apparent surprise: "Had a falling-out with him?"

"Well, we don't speak as we pass by," returned the little broker, grimly.

Gummett laughed.

"Have you got all the D. & L. you want, or shall I drop in on Green and get what he has, if he has any?"

"You can do so. But I see the price has fallen off this morning."

"Yes. Guess it will go up again."

"Don't give Green more than 57 1-2."

"All right," and Gummett retired.

Gummett returned in fifteen minutes saying that he had seen Green and that he had 10,000 shares which he was willing to let go at 57 1-2.

"Take them," replied Nat.

The deal was made.

When Nat next looked at the ticker he saw that 6,000 shares had been sold at the Exchange for 57 7-8.

"I guess it's going up again. I've got 31,000 shares now and ought to make a good thing out of them."

On coming from lunch he saw with some consternation that D. & L. had suddenly gone down to 52 3-8.

This meant a loss of \$150,000 to him, unless things improved.

Nat rushed around to Gummett's and put up additional margin.

When he got back to the office Andy walked into his private room.

"I want to till ye somethin' I heard, sor," he said.

"What is it, Andy?" asked Nat.

"I wint into one of thim cafes in Broad Strate, sor, and I saw Mister Gummett, and Mister Gunn, and Mister Grane, and Mister Frinch, and Mister Keatin' all laughin' and talkin' together, sor."

"Well, what about it?"

"They was laughin' and talkin' about ye, sor," said the boy, earnestly.

"About me, eh?"

"Yis, sor. I heard Mister Frinch say thot they had ye where the hair was short at last."

"Indeed!" replied Nat, greatly interested and somewhat disturbed.

"Yis, sor. Mister Grane said he had unloaded tin thousand shares on ye at some figure thot I don't remimber."

"Mr. Green said that, did he?"

"Yis, sor. And Mister Keating said he was sorry thot he hadn't been able to sill ye more than 5,000 through Mister Gummett."

"Mr. Keating said that?"

"Yis, sor. And Mister Frinch said he was sorry, too, thot he had only pushed 5,000 on ye."

"By George! This is interesting!" ejaculated Nat.

"And it seems Mister Gunn and Mister Gummett had sold ye 5,000 aich thimsilves. Thin some woman had started the ball rollin' by sellin' ye 1,000 shares outright at the market. I thought I'd tell ye this, sor, for it looked suspicious to me the way they were callin' ye insultin' names, sich as lobster, and aisy mark, and so on."

"I'm much obliged to you, Andy, for telling me what you have."

"There's some more yit, sor."

"Well?"

"They said they had control of the stock, the name of which they didn't mintion, and thot they were goin' to squeeze ye good by forcin' the orice down to nixt dure to nothin'."

"Who said that?"

"Mister Grane, sor."

"Is that all, Andy?"

"Yis, sor."

"All right. You may go."

It was certainly startling news for Nat to find he was caught in a trap himself, and that Mr. Gummett, who was acting for him, was one of the conspirators.

"No wonder D. & L. went back to its usual price," thought the little broker. "I've been hoodwinked into the idea that there was a pool behind the stock engaged in trying to corner it and send the price up. Those chaps have been ringing in wash sales on me to make a fictitious advance in order to lead me on. Well, they've done it, all right. Now it's up to me to get out at the least loss I can. If those chaps knew I had over a million at my back when they started in they would no doubt have tried to unload twice as much stock on me in order to make sure of crippling me. I guess, as the case stands, I can meet any further call for margins made on me. No matter how low they may be able to force it down they won't be able to keep it down long enough to beat me. I wish I knew some way of turning the tables on them. I could do it by calling on Uncle Sylvester, but I don't want to let him know I've been caught in such a trap. He'd give me the laugh, for he's as good as told me I was sure to get it in the neck before long. No, he mustn't know about the hole I'm in. I must get out of it without any assistance from him."

Then Nat began to figure the situation out.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LITTLE BROKER SECURES UNEXPECTED BACKING.

"Let me see," said Nat to himself, "I've got something like \$300,000 up on margin on those 30,000 shares. If the Keating crowd can force it as low as 40 I'll have to put up \$300,000 more to save myself. That, with the \$52,000 I paid that lady who opened the scheme will stand me in \$650,000. I will then have \$450,000 to meet a further call for margins. The price will have to go below 25 to put me on the ragged edge, and the stock is too good to take any such tumble as that, so I am fairly safe. However, I stand to lose the difference between 52 or so and 58 in the end. That will be \$150,000. I don't mind that half

as much as the idea that those slick roosters have managed to put me in the hole. I wish I had a few millions at my disposal. You can gamble on it I'd make them sick before I got through with them. In order to force the price down they'll have to sell a whole lot of the stock short. Now, if I had the cash to meet their game by buying as fast as they offered the stock I could hold the price until I had frightened them into drawing off. Then I could keep right on and bull the stock up so that they would have to cover their sales at a loss. That would be a fine revenge; but, unfortunately, I haven't the coin to carry such a scheme through. I think I'll go over and see Uncle Sylvester, outline the plans of these foxy gentlemen, and suggest that he get up a bull pool to beat them. He needn't know that I'm in a hole at all. It will be a good chance for him and his friends to make a big wad of money at the expense of the Keating and French crowd."

Accordingly, Nat put on his hat and ran over to his uncle's office.

"I've got a tip for you, Uncle Sylvester," he said, as soon as he seated himself alongside his relative's desk.

"A tip, eh? What is it?"

Nat immediately told him about the plans of the Keating and French crowd.

"How did you find out they are going to sell D. & L. short in order to bear the price?" asked his uncle, with all the caution of an experienced operator.

"Oh, I found it out," nodded Nat, confidently. "And it's a sure pointer."

"Your word is all right in its way, but I'd like to have a little better evidence before I could think of taking advantage of your information. If what you say is true it will take a few millions to fight them successfully. I wouldn't think of going into the game alone."

"Well, what's to hinder you getting up a pool to beat those chaps?"

"Nothing, if I could show the game up in a convincing way to the persons I would ask to go in with me; but I couldn't go to them merely on your word. That isn't business. I must have good proof of the fact that Keating and his crowd are going to work this bear movement which you claim they are about to do. Bring me satisfactory evidence and then I'll look into the matter."

"I'm afraid I can't make it any clearer than I have done," replied Nat. "You will have some evidence, however, by to-morrow or next day, when those gentlemen begin operations. Then it may be too late for you to make your arrangements in time to head them off. They ought to be blocked at the start. If I wasn't up to my neck in another matter I'd try to form a bull pool myself."

"You'd form a bull pool, would you? Say, young man, your nerve is simply inexhaustible! One of these days I suppose you expect to be king of the Street," he concluded, sarcastically.

"I may be. Who knows?" replied Nat, coolly.

"You'd better return to your own office. I've got a lot of work to attend to."

"Then you won't do anything about my tip?"

"Not unless I can have something more convincing than your word."

"All right, uncle. You are losing half a million or so by

turning my proposition down. Just watch the market for the next few days, and you will see what you will see."

"Humph! I expect to see you looking for that million of yours with a telescope before the year is out," growled Sylvester Noble.

"You needn't worry about that million. It looks so lonesome that I'm hustling to get another to keep it company. Good-day," and Nat walked out as chipper as a young colt.

He ran upstairs to see Eunice for a few minutes, and then returned to his own office.

As he was crossing Wall Street a little, old, white-haired gentleman who was coming toward him suddenly slipped on a banana peel and came down in a heap in the street.

Nat ran to his assistance, picked him up and helped him back on the sidewalk.

"I hope you're not hurt, sir," he said, in a sympathetic tone.

"I don't know," quavered the old gentleman.

He looked very much the worse for the shock he had sustained, and Nat didn't feel as if he ought to leave him in that condition.

"You'd better come up to my office until you recover. It is only a few doors from here. Then, if you wish me to, I'll see you to your destination."

"Thank you. I will do as you say," replied the old gentleman, gratefully.

So Nat led the demoralized old man to the Niobe Building, took him up the elevator to the fourth floor and introduced him to his office.

One of the appointments of the private room was a leather-covered lounge, and Nat told the old gentleman to lie down on it till he felt better.

"I am very much obliged to you, young man. Will you tell me your name?"

"Nat Noble, sir."

"Thank you. You are employed here, I suppose?"

"No, sir. I am a broker, and this is my office."

The little old gentleman seemed astonished.

"You are young to be a broker. You are not twenty-one, I should judge."

"No, sir."

"Are you any relation to Sylvester Noble, broker, of Exchange Place?"

"Yes, sir. He is my uncle."

"Indeed! Your uncle used to act as one of my brokers when I was active in the Street."

"Then you have been connected with Wall Street?" said Nat.

"Very much so," smiled the old gentleman. "My name is Josiah Lombard."

"Josiah Lombard!" cried Nat, to whom the name was familiar. "Is it possible you are that famous operator?"

"I am."

"You were the associate of Jim Fisk, Jay Gould, and others of that crowd?"

"I was. They are all gone now. I am the last of the old guard, and I suppose I must follow them soon, for I am nearly ninety."

"One would never think so to look at you. You look good for many years yet."

"One can never tell," sighed the old gentleman. "So

you are a young broker just starting out on your Wall Street career?"

"Yes, sir. I've only been a few months in business, but I've done pretty well. I've made a million already."

"A million! How much capital did you have to start with?"

"Twenty-five thousand dollars."

The little old gentleman looked at him with interest.

"Will you tell me how you made a million in so short a time with so small a financial backing?"

Nat recounted all the particulars of the three deals he had been in, and his visitor listened attentively.

"You have certainly been very fortunate. I myself believe in luck. I never cared to have business dealings with unlucky people. I judge you are one of those on whom Fortune delights to shower her favors. You will probably be a very rich man in time."

"It won't be my fault if I'm not," replied Nat, confidently.

Then he told the old gentleman about the trap he had walked into, and how he expected to extricate himself with a loss of not over \$150,000.

"This is my first set-back, but as it is a put-up job on me it is not altogether my fault. If I had a few millions at my disposal I'd get back at those brokers in a way that would make their hair curl, and come out a million or more ahead of the game."

"How would you do it?" asked the little old gentleman, clearly much interested in his new friend.

Nat outlined the plan he would follow, and showed how it was bound to prove a winner with sufficient financial backing.

"I tried to interest my uncle in the idea; but he couldn't see it with my eyes, and so he has lost a good chance, and the probability is that the crowd who is against me, while they will not succeed in hurting me as much as they calculate on, will be sure to make several hundred thousand dollars if their capital enables them to carry out their plan."

"Young man," said the old gentleman, after a few moments' thought, during which he studied Nat's face attentively, "you have interested me greatly. Besides, I am under great obligations to you for your kindness to me. I have a great mind to back you in this deal of yours. I have securities in the vaults of the Manhattan National on which I could raise a dozen million in cash, if necessary. This situation you are in arouses all the old-time spirit of the Street within me. I seem to smell the battle from afar. I can imagine what would happen in the Exchange if you were able to carry your plans through. But it takes an experienced general to conduct such an important fight against half-a-dozen shrewd brokers. If I thought you could handle the game I'd back you with as many millions as you might need."

"I could work it all right, sir," replied Nat, confidently, with the fire of an aggressive nature in his eye.

"Well, give me an outline of how you would carry the deal through from this point," said the old gentleman, after regarding him thoughtfully.

Nat started in and laid down his plan of operation, point by point, covering every emergency he could think of.

When he had finished the little old gentleman said:

"Run down to the offices of the D. & L. road and find

out how many shares of the stock is on the market. Find out in whose names the larger holdings are recorded on the books. I will wait till you return."

Nat put on his hat and was off like a shot.

In less than an hour he was back with the information.

The old gentleman studied the paper carefully.

"Very well," he said. "I am going to back you in this deal. I will advance you money enough to pay for every share sold to you. Come with me over to the Manhattan National. I will introduce you to the cashier, and instruct him to pay for all shares of D. & L. presented C. O. D. at the bank. My securities in the vaults will be several times sufficient to meet all the payments. When you are ready to sell, the bank will make all deliveries for cash. You will be charged with the current rate of interest for the money I will furnish you to put the deal through. All over that will be paid to you by the bank when a final settlement is made. Is that satisfactory, Noble?"

"Perfectly," replied Nat, not a little excited and enthused by the prospect ahead.

"Then, if you please, we will go," said the old gentleman, rising.

Nat gave him his arm and they went out together.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LITTLE BROKER BEGINS HIS BIG FIGHT.

Nat Noble looked like a different boy when he walked into his office on the following morning.

He was on the eve of a deal that would make even his uncle sit up and take notice.

The little old gentleman had taken him to one of the biggest brokerage firms in the Street, and Nat had outlined his plans to the head of the firm.

The details of the fight to beat the Keating and French crowd to a stand-still were carefully elaborated and everything arranged for the fray which was to commence as soon as the opposition got busy.

Nat had arranged with his brokers to direct operations from the visitors' gallery of the Exchange, as he couldn't go on the floor, and a code of signals was fixed up between them so as to convey certain directions and suggestions from the little broker to his active workers.

At ten o'clock Nat was promptly on hand at his post, and the broker who was to conduct the first part of the fight was on the floor with his lieutenants when the chairman opened business.

Neither Keating nor French appeared in the Exchange until eleven o'clock, though Green and Gummett were there, and so nothing was done in D. & L. for the first hour.

Keating walked to the D. & L. standard and offered 1,000 shares at 51-1-2.

One of his lieutenants bought it in, thus establishing a basis for the trades that were to follow.

Keating immediately offered 2,000 shares for 51.

Some broker bought.

Keating then offered 5,000 for 50.

Nat waved his arm and his broker took the shares.

For the next quarter of an hour there were exciting times

around the D. & L. pole, as Keating sold the stock down to 46.

Then there was a lull of ten minutes, which was used in comparing trades.

Keating had sold 50,000 shares of D. & L., and the bulk of it had been bought by Nat through his broker and aides.

Nat had arranged with another broker on the outside to look after his margins on the 30,000 shares held subject to his orders by Gummett.

After the stock had gone to 46 Keating stepped out of the circle in order to wait for information from Gummett, who had returned to his office.

If Nat failed to cover his margins again, and thus allowed himself to be sold out, the Keating crowd would proceed at once to cover their short sales, and then French would step in and bid the price back to 52 or over.

While Keating was away there was some desultory trading done in D. & L., the price gradually advancing to 50.

Nat's broker took no part in this.

When Keating learned that Nat had made good his margins he returned to the fray and began to sell another 30,000 shares short, beating the price down to 45.

All his offers were taken in by Nat's broker or his assistants.

After another lull Keating renewed his efforts and got the price to 43.

A big crowd had by this time gathered around the D. & L. pole, which now occupied the chief attention of the Exchange.

There was excitement to burn as Keating continued his raid on the stock.

He sold 40,000 shares more, and got the stock down to 40, when he hauled off to await information from Gummett.

Nat's representative having met a further call for margin, the news was sent to Keating, who resumed his bear tactics, and after selling 60,000 shares, got the price down to 35.

This necessitated more margin from Nat, and it was met as before.

Keating and his bunch held a hurried consultation.

They had sold 200,000 shares of D. & L. short, most of it to Nat unknowingly, and they saw that the little broker was no nearer being wiped out of his 30,000 shares than before.

They had taken a big risk in their efforts to ruin the boy, and were afraid to go any further.

Accordingly, all of them except Keating began to try and buy the stock to cover.

This fact was immediately telegraphed to Nat, who at once gave the signal to rush the price up.

His broker and lieutenant then began bidding at a lively rate.

In a few minutes they pushed the stock from 35 up to 50, amid a pandemonium of excitement, in which the frantic efforts of French and his bunch to get the stock back cheap were snowed under.

After a short lull, Nat's broker resumed his bidding, carrying the price up to 55.

Very little real stock had come out until after the price passed 52, and then Nat's broker hauled off for a breathing spell.

Keating and his crowd were now in a bad hole.

They had pledged themselves to deliver 200,000 shares of D. & L. at varying figures below 50 down to 35, expecting to be able to buy in enough under 40 during the panicky feeling to make good.

Nat had blocked them by forcing the price up to 55 so fast as to take their breath away.

When Nat's broker got busy again the stock began to come out fast, as the price went kiting to 60.

Of course the little broker's representative took in all that was thrown at him and as long as he did that he was master of the situation.

Nat, being backed with capital enough to take and pay for every share offered to his broker, was rapidly cornering the supply.

The Keating and French crowd was paralyzed by the unexpected turn of affairs.

They had been caught in their own trap, and did not know how to extricate themselves.

They recognized that some powerful interests were forcing them to the wall, and saw that unless things changed they would be ruined, for it would be impossible for them to keep their engagements.

Nat had been compelled, during the slump, to put up \$650,000 additional margins, but now, with the stock going higher, his 30,000 was not only out of danger but accumulating a profit.

Already he was \$80,000 ahead of the game, provided he could unload his shares.

At two o'clock the price was up to 65, and then he signaled his broker to draw off.

At the same time he sent a note to Gummett by messenger instructing him to sell his holdings in small lots.

Gummett was in duty bound to obey orders, though he saw that the little broker was slipping out of the net spread for him, and at a profit, too.

All the 30,000 shares were disposed of at prices between 65 and 62, or on an average of 63 1-2, and Nat realized a profit of \$180,000 at the expense of the Keating bunch.

That, however, was but a minor issue compared with the 250,000 shares he had bought with Josiah Lombard's money.

Of that number 50,000 were certain to be delivered at the bank in the morning.

As to the 200,000 which Keating had engaged to deliver at low prices, and the bulk of which he had been unable to buy in, he and his bunch would be obliged to borrow it for delivery, if they could get it, at a tremendous loss, that in the end was bound to cripple them at the figure D. & L. closed at that afternoon, which was around 61.

All the stock actually delivered at the bank would have to be resold at a profit by Nat before the big deal could be successfully completed, and that was a far harder job to put through than the part he had already engineered.

He left the Exchange to consult with his brokers over next day's campaign, and as he did so he felt that he carried a weight on his young shoulders that made him feel ten years older than when he got up that morning.

His own private resources had so far been increased from something over a million to nearly a million and a quarter, but according to his agreement with Mr. Lombard he stood a chance of being wiped out if he failed to carry the deal through to a successful termination.

His efforts to sell the 250,000 shares already accumulated, if the Keating crowd managed by hook or crook to meet their engagements with his broker, might result in a big panic on the Exchange, unless the work was delicately managed.

A panic would mean his ruin, if it went far enough, and the salvation of the opposition bunch after all.

It was no wonder, then, if Nat felt the awful responsibility he was facing, and almost dreaded the coming of the morrow, which meant victory or Waterloo for him.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LITTLE BROKER MAKES A FEW PERTINENT REMARKS.

While Nat was in consultation with his brokers, the Keating crowd was holding a confab in French's office.

Green and Keating were in a particularly bad humor.

"That boy has got clean out of the tangle with a profit, while we're in a tight box," snarled Green. "The question is, what are we going to do to extricate ourselves?"

"We've got to deliver 200,000 shares at the Manhattan National at figures all the way from 35 to 50, mostly way below the latter," said Keating. "I'd give considerable to know who the bank is acting for."

"It must be a moneyed crowd we're up against," said French. "Garfield & Staley are the brokers, and it is one of the biggest firms in the Street. It was our ill-luck to handle a stock that some combine was engineering to corner, from all appearances."

"Yes, we set this trap to catch the boy and have been caught in it ourselves," said Gummett. "He's met every call for margins like a little man. Either his resources are greater than we figured on, or his uncle came to his rescue."

"I guess his uncle must have lent him money to tide him over. How much was he called upon to put up altogether?"

"Six hundred and fifty thousand," replied Gummett.

"Quite a good-sized sum for a little broker like him to handle," remarked Gunn. "Besides that, he bought 1,000 shares of D. & L. outright from that lady at the start for \$52,000. Did you sell that for him, too?"

"No," replied Gummett. "I simply sold the 30,000 in small lots, according to his orders, which I was bound to carry out. His net profit over all expenses will amount to \$180,000. So you see I'll have to send him a check tomorrow for over \$800,000. The 1,000 shares will at the present market price yield him a further profit of nearly \$10,000. So, instead of getting revenge on him, we've only succeeded in putting nearly \$200,000 in his pocket, as well as getting ourselves into a nasty hole. The scheme has acted like a boomerang, and I'm thoroughly disgusted with the whole thing."

"You're not any more disgusted than the rest of us," snorted Keating. "There is no use of crying over spilled milk. It's up to us now to get out of the fix the best way we can."

"We have only been able to buy in 25,000 shares of the stock at a price that we could stand. The balance we'll have to borrow, and trust to luck to be able to get the stock later

at a figure that will enable us to return it without going to the wall. At the present moment if we had to cash up at the market, some of us would lose our seats at the Exchange," said French.

The others realized the truth of their associate's remark, and looked gloomily at one another.

At that moment the tinge of the atmosphere in French's private office was decidedly blue.

Keating made out a list of brokers from whom he expected to get the needed shares and handed it around, each of his associates selecting a certain number to call on to secure the number of shares allotted to them.

At that moment a note was handed in to French.

He opened it and read it with an exclamation of surprise.

"What do you think of this?" he said. "It sounds almost too incredible to believe, and yet the writer, who is a particular friend of mine, assures me that the facts are true."

"What facts?" demanded Keating, impatiently, while the rest were all attention.

"Listen," replied French.

Then he read the note out aloud.

It stated that the bull movement of the day had been directed by Nat Noble, who seemed to be in charge of it.

The writer had observed his presence in the visitors' gallery of the Exchange, and caught on to the signals which were exchanged between him and Brokers Garfield & Staley on the floor.

The statement acted like the explosion of a bomb in the office.

Even Keating looked amazed.

"It doesn't seem possible that that boy can be at the back of a big movement such as was inaugurated to-day," he said, incredulously.

"Possible or not, I can assure you that the information is perfectly reliable when it comes from Eldridge," replied French. "Noble must have interested his uncle to get up a bull clique in order to save his nephew from being wiped out."

"Pshaw! If Sylvester Noble did anything like that he wouldn't leave the workings of it in the hands of that boy. He's too old a bird for that. He'd have looked after the deal himself, or had his most experienced broker attend to the matter. In any case he'd have hardly gone to Garfield & Staley and employed them. Depend on it, if Nat Noble was interested in to-day's battle he's backed by somebody other than his uncle," said Keating, savagely.

"Who else but his uncle would come to his rescue?" growled Green. "This is a game of millions. Garfield & Staley bought fully \$10,000,000 worth of D. & L. stock to-day, all of which has got to be paid for on delivery to the Manhattan National in the morning. A pool is certainly at the back of this business. Now, tell me what combination of capitalists would put that boy in charge of their deal? Why, a false move on his part would be likely to wreck the whole game."

"I'm not answering conundrums," answered French. "I am merely presenting facts as they have been brought to my notice. If that boy is working the deal from the gallery he'll be there in the morning. We can then watch him and see what he's up to."

"He has no right to carry on business from the gallery," cried Green, angrily. "If he attempts to do it to-morrow I'll have him arrested and put out of the building. Then I'll see that he's kept out after this for abusing the privilege accorded to spectators."

"We'll delegate that business to you, Green," chuckled French. "You can carry it out better than any one of us."

The meeting then broke up and the traders separated to meet again at five o'clock.

It was close to five when Nat left the office of Garfield & Staley after fixing up a plan for the morrow.

He almost ran into Broker French, who was coming along the corridor of the building.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. French," said Nat, with his customary politeness. "How is the world using you?"

"You've got a whole lot of nerve to ask me that question," replied French. "I suppose you think you're the whole thing just now."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because I understand that you have been making things hum at the Exchange to-day."

"What put such a thing as that in your head?"

"Trying to play innocent, are you?" sneered French. "You're like the ostrich who, when pursued, buries his head in the sand under the impression that he's hiding himself. You're a new thing yet, and have lots to learn. Probably you'll learn a few new kinks to-morrow."

"I'm learning new kinks every day," retorted Nat. "I'm learning who are trying to get my fleece away from me, for one thing. And I am learning how to protect myself from some apparently good friends who shake hands with me and tell me what a good fellow I am before my face; then they get together and lay plans to ruin me. Oh, yes, I'm learning something new every day, and expect to learn a lot more before I turn up my toes and go to the happy hunting grounds, where there's no such thing as a stock exchange."

"What are you talking about?" snorted French.

"Nothing in particular. I was just relieving myself of a few philosophic remarks, that's all."

"What do you mean by people shaking hands with you before your face, and then putting up a job on you behind your back?"

"You ought to know, Mr. French," replied Nat, coolly.

"Do you mean to insinuate——"

"I'm not insinuating anything. Merely stating a few facts that seem to be of ordinary occurrence down here among some of the brokers. A fellow has got to keep his wits about him all the time, or snip! goes a pair of sharp shears, and he's minus a bunch of fleece. It isn't always the early bird that gets the worm in this neighborhood, is it, Mr. French? but the bird that has eyes in the back of his head, as well as in front."

"I'd like to know just what you're getting at. I never heard you talk this way before."

"That's because I didn't know as much as I do now."

"Indeed!" sneered French. "You may know more to-morrow about this time."

Thus speaking, the trader walked off.

"That sounds like a veiled threat," muttered Nat, walking out of the building.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LITTLE BROKER STARTS A PANIC.

The sun rose on Wall Street next morning just as it had done every day for a week past.

When the clock on Trinity Church pointed to nine, all the streets leading to the financial district were alive with clerks of all ages and importance, and lots of pretty, and some that were not around when beauty was given out, typewriters, wending their way in a brisk fashion toward their respective offices.

After them came the people who didn't have to be at their places of business exactly on the minute, and intermingled with them were the early "lamps" who had read in the morning editions that something would be on tap in Wall Street that day.

Then came the brokers, and other bosses, all wearing a look of business.

The brokers' offices were crowded to overflowing before ten, for the unexpected rise of D. & L. above 60 had attracted great attention and anticipation of what the day would bring forth.

The market looked buoyant in every way, and it was expected that D. & L. might go to 70 before three o'clock.

The outsiders had brought down fat pocketbooks with them to put on the stock in expectation of reaping a golden profit.

All signs pointed to a lively day on 'Change, and everybody was out to make the nimble dollar.

Nat Noble came down early.

He appeared as soon almost as Andy had opened up.

Andy's left eye was discolored with a bluish ring that morning.

"What's the matter, Andy?" asked Nat. "Did you run against a door in the dark last night?"

"No, sor; I run ag'in a fist," replied the boy, frankly.

"It must have been a hard one," laughed the little broker.

"Yis, sor. It was the fist of Michael Grady, one of thim district missingers, but he promised not to do it ag'in."

"What did you do to him?"

"Well, sor, I dunno exactly. Me fists acted kind of reckless like, do ye moind. A fri'nd of his tould me this mornin' that he'd be in the hospital a wake."

"You must be a terror, Andy."

"Well, sor, I'm gettin' tired of bein' insulted widout cause, so I thought I'd taich the b'y a lesson. Maybe the rist of his gang will take warnin' and lave me alone in the future."

"You ought to have had your eye painted. It looks bad in an office."

"Painted, is it? I niver heard of thot rimey for a black eye. Shall I have it painted white, sor?"

"You'd better call at a druggist's this afternoon. Maybe he'll be able to fix you up."

"Sure, I thought it was a sign painter I should go to."

"Not at all, Andy. It's a different kind of painting altogether that your eye requires."

"Yis, sor; if ye say so, sor. There's two litters for ye on your disk, brought be the postman."

Nat went inside and read the letters, which were from two new out-of-town customers.

At a quarter to ten he went over to Garfield & Staley's office and had a final talk with Mr. Garfield, after which he went over to the Exchange.

There was a crowd around the D. & L. post when the gong opened business, and Garfield was in the center of it.

He started the fun by offering 62 for any part of 5,000 shares.

In a moment the excitement began and the mob of brokers, the bulk of them with buying orders in their pockets, surged around Garfield.

Little by little he forced the price up, while buying and selling went on around him, until he got it to 70.

Then Nat made a signal intended for Staley.

That broker and his lieutenants started in selling on the quiet.

Garfield was doing his best, and successfully, to sustain the price, and even force it higher.

A messenger brought a note to Staley at that moment from the bank, notifying him that the Keating people had presented the 200,000 shares of D. & L. sold by Keating to Garfield.

That let them out as far as their previous day's engagements were concerned, but they had the bulk of that stock to buy in yet if they could get it at a price within the scope of their united capital.

Nat saw Broker Green circulating around on the floor, but he did not suspect that that individual was watching him.

Immediately after Nat signaled Staley to buy, Green hurried off the floor.

A few minutes later he appeared with a policeman in the gallery.

The pair made at once for the little broker.

"There he is, officer! Arrest him!" cried Broker Green.

Nat turned and looked at them in astonishment.

"Hold on there!" he protested, indignantly. "What have I done?"

The policeman, however, reached for him as though he were a common crook.

"Come, now, young man," he said, roughly. "Get out of here!"

"What for? I have a right here," objected Nat.

"You have no right here!" cried Green, angrily.

"Well, I have the privilege, then, of staying here."

"You've forfeited that by trying to conduct operations on the floor when you're not a member of the Exchange. Throw him out, officer!"

"Move on!" said the policeman, shoving the little broker toward the exit leading to the stairs.

"All right," replied Nat, seeing that resistance would only lead to his arrest, and that he could not afford to risk. "I'll go; but you needn't be so strenuous about it. Take your hands off me. You are exceeding your authority, and I could make a complaint against you to the commissioner."

The officer wisely released him when he saw that the boy intended going of his own accord.

"So that is your word, Mr. Green, is it?" said Nat, when they got to the head of the stairs. "Trying to get square with me because I taught you and your crowd a lesson yesterday—a lesson you all deserve for springing a measly trap

on me. I'm not through with you yet. I haven't forgotten that trick you played on me some weeks ago, when you went back on your verbal agreement to make good that \$50,000 you borrowed on Midland Central. I've got the stock in my safe yet. Some day it will be up again and I'll get my money back anyway, without any thanks to you. You're a gentleman—I don't think!"

"How dare you talk to me in that way?" roared Green, furiously.

"I dare to because I have no respect for a man of your principles."

"Throw him downstairs, officer! Do you hear him insulting me?"

"Move on, young man!" said the officer, threateningly.

"Look here, Mr. Green," said Nat, in a compressed tone.

"I've money enough behind me to make you and your crowd of sharpers look like thirty cents. And I'm going to force the whole of you to the wall before I'm done with you. I'll see that you'll have the time of your life getting D. & L. shares under 70 to meet your obligations. It was I who bought those 200,000 shares of Keating yesterday which you had to borrow to save your skins to-day. You expect to get those shares when the price gets back to around 50. Well, I'll see that the price doesn't get back there in time to save you. That's all I've got to say to you, and you may carry my words to Keating, French, and the rest of your associates."

Nat walked downstairs as mad as a hatter.

He was now looking for revenge on the opposition bunch, and at the critical stage of the game he had lost his head.

Five minutes later he sent directions in to his brokers that surprised them.

The first was to Staley to throw stock on the market to break the price temporarily.

Staley could not disobey, though he thought it a crazy act.

So he began offering the stock at the last quotation right and left.

Intense excitement ensued.

The brokers who had been buying as fast as they could for their customers stopped and stared aghast.

Brokers who had been buying for themselves got frightened at what appeared to be a new bear attack, and hastened to unload.

The whole Exchange was thrown into sudden confusion and a few moments later a wild panic set in.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

The news flew through the Street like wildfire, and customers in the offices interested in D. & L. and other stock began to act like crazy people in their eagerness to save themselves from ruin.

The newspaper reporters wired their journals that the market had gone to pieces.

The only persons who were hilariously happy were Keating, French and the rest of the bunch.

D. & L. was falling at a rate that promised them security.

Inside of half an hour they expected to be on easy street once more.

Nat suddenly woke up to the fact that he had made a blunder.

He had played into the hands of his enemies, instead of accomplishing what he had expected to do.

The panic must be stopped at all hazards.

He sent word in to Garfield to buy right and left and that he would have him sustained.

Then he rushed to his uncle's office.

"Uncle, I want you to help me out. I want you to buy D. & L. for me. The panic in the Exchange has got to be stopped at all hazards. I've got a million and a quarter dollars that I will put up as margin. Use every cent of it if necessary. Get busy at once. Every moment counts."

"Why—why!" fairly gasped Sylvester Noble. "What does this mean?"

"No matter what it means. Do as I say, or I'll throw my money into another broker's pockets. Send all your lieutenants into the Exchange with instructions to stop the slump as soon as possible."

Sylvester Noble readily saw that his nephew was heavily involved in the fate of D. & L., though he could not understand in what way it was, since Nat claimed to have a million and a quarter of cash at his back, and that was a quarter of a million more than the boy admitted possessing at their last interview.

"If this panic goes on I'm ruined, uncle, so don't ask for further explanation, but get to work, and get to work quicker than lightning."

In a brief space of time Sylvester Noble started his representative and assistants buying D. & L. as fast as they could take it in.

Garfield and his lieutenants had already partially stemmed the tide, and as soon as he was joined by the Noble forces the slump stopped and the price began to advance once more.

As soon as the market had turned in earnest, Nat called off his uncle's people.

They had bought in 60,000 shares for him at an average of 64.

Nat sent word to Garfield to force the price as high as he could, and then instructed Staley to resume his original programme of quiet selling at the market.

Confidence had been restored after the brief slump, and everybody was buying once more.

The stock closed at 75 that day, and Nat had succeeded in getting rid of 90,000 shares held by the bank.

Next day, with the price up at 80, and the public wild over D. & L., he got rid of the balance of the stock bought by Garfield.

On the third day, with the price still being sustained by his brokers, he instructed his uncle to sell the 60,000 shares in small lots.

He got an average of 76 for the stock, netting a profit on it of \$700,000.

By that time Keating and his crowd were hopelessly in the soup.

Every man of them was forced to make an assignment, and each lost his seat in the Exchange.

Nat then called Garfield & Staley off the job and left D. & L. to find its proper level.

The two brokers made a wad of money out of commissions, and Nat had a big interest bill to settle with the bank in Josiah Lombard's behalf, but in spite of all that he cleared a million and a half over and above his outside profits on the deal, making him worth \$3,500,000.

When he later on explained the whole thing to his Uncle Sylvester, and showed him that he had made two and one-half millions out of that one deal, the seasoned old broker could hardly believe the evidence of his eyes.

"I'll take back all I said about you, Nat," he said. "It's my opinion that you are a young Jay Gould and Jim Fisk rolled into one. You're a natural born operator, and I expect to hear that you'll be the king of the Street before you're thirty."

Of course Nat carried the story of his success to Eunice Bond.

She was also amazed at his extraordinary success, and said so.

"What do you care, Eunice? You're going to marry a multi-millionaire in good time and become a member of the most exclusive society of New York. People will say you're one of the few particularly fortunate ones. Now, of the two of us I think I am the more fortunate, for in winning you I will get the loveliest and best little girl in all the world, and that's something that money cannot always buy."

"You foolish boy!" cried Eunice, with a happy little laugh.

The newspapers got hold of the particulars of the big deal that Nat Noble engineered, and gave considerable space to the story.

Then the Street took its hat off to the little broker.

The publicity that he got was the making of a prosperous business for Nat.

Customers began to flock to his office, and he soon had to rent more commodious quarters, hire a bookkeeper and a stenographer, and in time other clerks:

Andy Moore no longer warmed the office chair for hours at a stretch.

On the contrary, he got exercise enough to work off the accumulated fat.

Constant contact with brokers and customers also softened down his brogue, but his hair continued as red as ever.

If you don't believe this story is strictly true, just visit Wall Street any business day and ask any broker the name of the boy who started a panic in Wall Street once upon a time, and he will tell you it was Nat Noble, the Little Broker.

THE END.

•Read "A STRUGGLE FOR FAME; OR, THE GAM-EST BOY IN THE WORLD," which will be the next number (131) of "Fame and Fortune Weekly."

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Fame and Fortune Weekly

NEW YORK, MARCH 27, 1908.

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GOOD STORIES.

Some of the great soldiers whose names adorn history's pages entered their first battles with a feeling of fear in their hearts. Frederick the Great simply lost his head at the battle of Molwitz. Had he not been a King it is safe to say that he would have been shot at the next sunrise. In the heat of the carnage he got an idea that the army under his command was being overwhelmed, so he put the spurs to his horse and dashed headlong among his soldiers. He rode many miles before he stopped in his wild flight. Late at night he was discovered hiding in an old mill, awaiting, as he thought, capture by the enemy. Then he discovered that the army he deserted had won the battle. As Frederick was a Prince everybody tried to forget the incident just as quickly as possible. And after that, when the King went to war, he was just as brave as any other soldier. General Grant, in his memoirs, tells us that, despite the fact that he was not new to the ways of war, he had a strange fear in his heart when, as commander of the Union forces, he found himself on the eve of his first battle of the Civil War. He adds, however, that he came to find that "the other fellow" had a similar feeling. In American history there is no more reckless warrior than the dashing Lighthorse Harry Lee. It seems strange, therefore, to find that, at the outset of the Continental struggle, Washington had to reprove him for his "prudence" in battle. Lee, though, up and told Washington that he was just as brave as the General-in-chief, and he made good his word.

As you may never see the new coin, it may interest you to know how it looks. The Washington Herald professes to have seen it, and says: "There never was an ugly \$10 gold piece minted, of course. They are all pretty, albeit some are prettier than others. But this last output is the loveliest of them all. In the first place, there is the eagle. You ought to see that high-art eagle. He wears a lovely pair of pants. At least we suppose they are pants—they look more like pants than anything else we know of. To be sure, they appear a little baggy and abbreviated, but we dare say they are stylish, and that counts for a great deal in art. He is strolling along leisurely, like an American gentleman should. That is, we suppose it's a he—surely a lady eagle would not be arrayed in trousers, even though some nature faker has sought to prove that the real American eagle is a female. The Indian lady on the front—we presume it is a lady, although it may have been intended for a gentleman—certainly wears a gorgeous hat. It does not appear to be on straight, exactly; but, then, a woman's hat is never on straight unless it is on crooked—according to high-art notions. The lady's mouth is slightly open, a trifle sneering, perhaps. The chin, prominent, aggressive; the eye, vacant and gazing into space—there being nothing else ahead into which she might gaze. For a lady

—or even a gentleman—the neck is very thick, being in diameter the length of a line drawn from the point of the chin to a point just above the eyebrow. The hair—so much as may be seen—is rather bedraggled, as though the damp air had taken all the curl out.

Awaiting the establishment of wireless telegraphy the French Government has fallen back on pigeon posts to keep up communication with some of its outlying posts in Central Africa. Especially has it been used in the case of the expedition under Dr. Martins, of the Pasteur Institute, who is in the Congo region studying the sleeping sickness which is ravaging that part of the Dark Continent. The headquarters of the pigeons has been established at Brazzaville, and the birds are taken out by parties starting thence into the forest. Great difficulty has been found in maintaining communication by telegraph. The natives steal the wire, the elephants break the trees and the climate interferes in all sorts of ways. Stringing long lines of field telegraph is simply hopeless. Unexpectedly good results have been reached with the pigeons. Communication over a circle of perhaps 360 miles radius is regularly kept up. Almost no birds have been lost. Many stations, as for instance one which Lieutenant Eremillet heads, stationed 120 miles from Brazzaville, exchange daily mails. Officers on the march also keep in touch with their base of supplies in this way. When the distance does not exceed 1,200 miles messages can be exchanged in a day by a system of relaying.

JOKES AND JESTS.

"Did I understand you to say that all rum selling has been stopped in your town?" "Not at all. I merely said it was strictly prohibited."

Editor—What is the matter with that new compositor? Instead of following copy in this story and setting up "foaming steed" he insists upon making it "foaming stein." Publisher—I guess we will have to forgive him. You see, he comes from Milwaukee.

Despairingly the Christian Scientist gazed upon the walls of heaven. In vain he had pleaded with old St. Peter. That worthy Keeper of the Keys had mutely pointed to the fateful sign which hung above his window. On this was inscribed: "Tickets bought of speculators will be refused at the gate."

Theater Sign Painter—Say, dat sign of our'n sayin' dat dey wuz \$10,000 spent on costumes fer de chorus girls ain't no good. De t'eyter across de street hez got one sayin' dat deirs cost \$25,000. Wot'll I do? Manager—Put one out saying that the costumes for our entire chorus cost less than \$25. That'll fetch 'em.

A Washington physician was recently walking on Connecticut Avenue with his five-year-old son, when they were obliged to stop at a side street to await the passing of a funeral procession. The youngster had never seen anything of the kind. His eyes widened. Pointing to the hearse he asked: "Dad, what's that?" "That, my son," said the physician, with a grim smile, "is a mistaken diagnosis."

S. F. Hood, of the Department of Agriculture, at a dinner where he was the guest of honor, told a sensational agricultural story, a story that should appeal to all suburbanites. "One beautiful spring morning," he began, "a suburbanite looked suspiciously over his hedge and said to his neighbor: 'Hey, what the deuce are you burying in that hole there?' The neighbor laughed—a harsh, bitter laugh. 'Oh,' he said, 'I'm just replanting some of my nasturtium seeds, that's all.' 'Nasturtium seeds?' shouted the first man, angrily. 'It looks more like one of my Buff Leghorn hens.' 'Oh, that's all right,' the other retorted. 'The seeds are inside.'"

A MERCIFUL TIGRESS

By Kit Clyde.

I had been out for a day's snipe-shooting with my friend Jack O'Grady in some swamps a few miles from his estate on the Patchagheri Hills; but, after meeting with fair success, we turned our steps homeward early in the afternoon, as I was somewhat fatigued. Having only just come up from the plains on a short visit to Jack, I was not in good condition for walking; and though the excitement of the sport had enabled me to sustain an unwonted amount of exercise in the stiff ground that morning, my feet began to feel very heavy before we had accomplished half the distance back to the bungalow. In this plight, on reaching a shady spot by the side of a little stream, I proposed a short halt to enable me to admire the grand scenery—as I said. Jack agreed to an "easy" for a quarter of an hour, but warned me that, having no desire to nurse me through a fever, he would not allow me to go to sleep—a refreshment I felt very much disposed to indulge in.

"If, however, you really care about seeing some of the grandest scenery in the world," said he, "you could not find a better point than near where we now are. About two hundred yards further down its course this stream precipitates itself over the rocks; and from the edge of the cliff you have a view, on a clear day, extending for more than forty miles over dense forests, rugged cliffs and fertile plain as far as the Indian Ocean."

It required an effort for me to regain my feet, but, knowing the imprudence of lying down in the rarefied mountain atmosphere whilst in an overheated condition, I bestirred myself, and we walked together toward the point O'Grady had mentioned.

"Now, tell me," exclaimed O'Grady, as we stood on the brink of the precipice, "have you ever seen anything finer than this?"

"Never," I replied with enthusiasm, "though I have travelled on foot through the grandest scenery of Europe."

It was, indeed, a magnificent sight. The day was clear though hot; and the slanting rays of the afternoon sun lit up the forest at our feet with a rich coloring only seen in a humid tropical country; whilst the immediate foreground was illuminated by a brilliant rainbow reflected on the spray rising in a cloud from the cascade, which fell sheer sixty feet on to the rocks below.

After gazing on the splendid panorama at my feet for some minutes in silence I was about to turn away, when an unexpected object arrested my attention, causing me to grasp O'Grady by the arm, while warning him in a whisper to observe silence and caution.

On a flat ledge of rock, about a hundred yards to the right of where we were standing, a magnificent full-grown tiger was stretched out asleep. It was lying on its right flank, basking in the sunshine, with its left forepaw over its eyes, and was evidently quite unconscious of our proximity.

The ledge of rock on which the royal beast was taking its siesta might be about thirty feet below the level of the ground on which we stood, and as we drew back out of sight I whispered a congratulation to O'Grady on the grand prize thus placed in our grasp. I suggested that we should load with ball-cartridge, creep up to the edge of the cliff immediately above where Stripes was reposing, and then fill the marauding beast full of holes in the region of the heart, at which fatal spot we could fire at such point-blank range as to make an instantaneous kill a matter of certainty. To my surprise, however, he did not seem to sympathize with my proposition, and I thought my plan for deliberately "potting" even a tiger had shocked his sportsman's chivalrous instincts.

"You see," I argued apologetically, "a tiger is such an exceptionally dangerous and destructive animal that I consider it is fair to destroy it when, where and how one can. And in the present case to flush the game before firing will be to lose all chance even of a snap shot, as with one bound it will disappear in the dense underwood close to the rock and be no

more seen, though you may hear of it again only too soon when some of your best cattle are lifted, or your lines are deserted by the estate coolies, in consequence of one or more of their number having furnished a light repast to his royal highness."

"No apology is necessary for your plan, my dear fellow," said O'Grady. "In ordinary circumstances I should not hesitate about following it myself, as it would be a good thing for the planting district to exterminate these formidable brutes. But, strange as it may seem, I think in the present instance I may be morally bound in honor to let the opportunity go by. However, we will load with ball-cartridge, creep to the edge of the cliff, as you suggest, and, if after seeing the animal at close quarters I should nod my head, we will shoot it dead where it lies. But if I shake my head we will quietly draw back without firing. Is it agreed?"

"Certainly," I replied; "though it seems strange to throw away such a chance."

"It is hard lines on you to ask you to observe such a restriction," resumed O'Grady. "But I will give you my full reasons by-and-by. At present, come on!"

Having loaded our guns, and seen that our knives were hanging free and ready to hand if wanted, we crept forward, making a circuit so as to bring us to the edge of the cliff opposite to where the tiger lay. I raised my gun, and with suspended breath looked eagerly toward O'Grady for the preconcerted signal. He paused a moment, and then shook his head.

I was keenly chagrined, but of course did not hesitate about respecting our compact. We stole noiselessly back to the bank of the stream where I had originally proposed to rest awhile.

"Sit down, old fellow," said O'Grady, "and I will tell you as briefly as possible my reasons for sparing that creature's life."

"All right, fire away," I replied, somewhat surlily, as I flung myself down on the grass; "only I must say that if that tigress had seen us sleeping peacefully on a ledge of rock, as we saw her, I doubt considerably whether we would both now be numbered amongst the living."

"It is for the very reason that she and I have met before, and that quite recently, on which occasion she spared my life, which was completely at her mercy, that I now grant her boon for boon. However, listen; and if after hearing my tale you think you ought to shoot that tigress I will not oppose you, though I will not fire at her myself, at least not unless it should be absolutely necessary to protect your life or my own."

"Good!" I murmured, my equanimity being restored, "I am all attention."

"About three weeks ago," began O'Grady, "I had occasion to visit a neighbor's estate, about four miles hence on the Koprapalli Ghaut; and as my pony happened to be lame just then I had to walk the distance. As my visit was strictly on business, which I wished to dispatch as soon as possible, and be back again by six o'clock that evening at the latest, I thought it better to have no inducement to delay my progress either going or returning by stopping to bag any game I might chance to meet with on my journey, and therefore purposely left my gun at home."

"The Koprapalli Ghaut has lately been improved by the road being carried round the well-known Honeycomb Rock, instead of over it as formerly; and this work, though adding a little to the distance, has greatly improved the gradient. This new section has been blasted out of the face of the cliff, which has a sheer descent of nearly two hundred feet from the roadway, and rises fully sixty feet above it. I had gone about half-way round this new cutting, and had just turned a corner in the road, when I came face to face with a large tigress, the same animal which we have just seen asleep. If you cannot imagine what a fellow's feelings would be in such circumstances, I am positive no words would convey a true impression to your mind."

"The tigress was evidently just as surprised as I was, and for about a minute, which seemed sixty to me, we stood and looked at each other, only about ten paces dividing us, which distance is, of course, a mere hop to a tiger. I momentarily expected the animal would crouch for its spring, and the

thought of flinging myself over the parapet of the road into the abyss below once suggested itself to my mind.

"As, however, she did not crouch for her spring, but continued standing in the roadway, banging her tail about lustily from side to side, I began to wonder what she really did mean to do, and bit by bit I found the terror I was in began to grow less intense. I bethought me presently of various stories of the power which the human eye is said to be capable of exercising on the brute creation, and I quickly formed the resolution of attempting to mesmerize my tigress. Accordingly I glared at her with an expression of fierce hatred which was meant to strike terror to her heart, but only produced more energetic flickings of her tail, so that I speedily abandoned intimidation. I next tried surprise, and raised my eyebrows as if in astonishment at her jolly good cheek in blocking up the imperial highway; but the only notice she took of this demonstration on my part was to advance one pace toward me.

"This was a negative triumph for mesmerism; the power of my resolute eyes had moved the tigress, though in the wrong direction. By all rules of the mysterious influence she ought to have quailed before my gaze, and have slunk off cowed and crestfallen. So, contracting my brow, I forthwith assumed a look of terrible anger, hoping thereby to convince her royal highness of the imprudence of pushing my forbearance too far. My look of displeasure she answered by advancing two paces, quick march, causing me to make a corresponding movement to the rear, which brought me to the parapet wall.

"There remained conciliation and, wreathing my countenance into benevolent smiles, I beamed on the tigress as if wishing to convey my sentiments of admiration for her great personal beauty and evident amiability of disposition. I hoped that as my antipathetic regards had attracted her, so my kindly aspect would, on principles of contrariety, repel her. But I was disappointed, as she immediately advanced three paces at the double. I was fairly checkmated; but somehow, though I did not for a moment suppose my life would be spared, I began to grow very callous as to my fate. I speculated as to whether I should prove tender; whether my death would be avenged; whether I should be regretted by my neighbors. If I were to write hard for a month I do not believe I could record all the subjects that crowded into my mind in those five minutes during which I and the tigress stood face to face. One thing I had observed with satisfaction, which was that the terrible beast was not angry; but any momentary ray of consolation I might have derived from that circumstance was extinguished by the reflection that neither am I possessed by fierce and consuming wrath against a sheep, for instance, when I cause him to be slain that I may browse upon his muscles. I reminded myself that, after all, tigers must eat to live, just as much as men.

"For fully a minute we continued to gaze at each other; and then the tigress advanced a pace. Apparently the end was at hand, as Madame Stripes took two more paces to the front. She paused for a few moments, and then, still keeping her eyes on me, once more advanced, but not exactly toward me. Could it be possible? Yes; thank Heaven! she meant to pass me. I was almost delirious with excitement at this new phase of the situation, the possibility of which had, of course, never for one instant suggested itself to my imagination.

"On she came, with majestic pace, and had almost passed me, when she paused. I suppose my reason must have been temporarily unbalanced by the fearful suspense I had endured, or I should hardly have done that act of madness I then committed. I raised my right hand, brought the palm down on her quarters with a hearty smack, calling out at the same time: 'Gee up, old lady!' The next instant I was knocked down insensible.

"On regaining consciousness I found I was hanging face downward over the precipice. I had evidently been dashed against the parapet wall with such force as to carry it away; and I should have gone over the brink with it had not the tigress arrested my fall by seizing me.

"After a few moments she lifted me up and deposited me face downward on the ghaut, and I expected instantly to feel

her fangs rending a *bifteck a la tartare* from my quivering flesh. But she did not bite; and, whether from feminine curiosity or mere caprice I cannot say, she presently turned me over on my back with one of her paws, I lying as rigid as possible, and feigning to be dead. She smelled my hair, my cheeks, my mouth; and finished her examination of my features by giving me a kiss, if a lick with a pliable nutmeg-grater can be so termed.

"I had been spared so long, and had suffered so much anxiety, that dread once more gave place to recklessness, and I could jest even in the dire extremity in which I lay; but my jocularity was soon checked by my becoming aware that blood was trickling slowly from my chin where the tigress had licked me; her rough tongue having peeled off the skin. Then I felt that all was up, knowing that the terrible beast, having once tasted my blood, would not be long ere she plunged her dreadful fangs into my jugular vein; and, closing my eyes tightly, I resigned myself to the fate my own folly had brought upon me.

"Once more I felt her breath upon my face. She was smelling me over, as if irresolute where to make the first bite, when all at once the sniffing ceased.

"Pwsstch!"

"The noise reverberated up the glen again, and I perceived it was caused by the tigress sneezing. Sniffing me all over, she had come upon some snuff I had spilled on my shirt-front, and her nostrils being unaccustomed to the pungent dust, she had received a violent shock to her nervous system. I lay perfectly still, and was presently overjoyed to see her walk away from me as if I were something too nasty for any decent, well-bred tigress to touch. She stopped several times to look back at me as she strode with leisurely majesty up the ghaut; and I was careful not to move as long as she was in sight; but the instant she disappeared round an angle in the road I picked myself up and ran as though Old Cloutie himself were after me, nor did I stop until I reached my friend's bungalow.

"He and some other fellows have organized one or two beats for my tigress, but have seen nothing of her, and I thought she had probably left this neighborhood. However, we now know that she is still here, and I leave it to you, having heard how she spared my life, to decide whether you will 'pot' her as she lies there asleep on the ledge of that rock."

"First of all," I asked, "how can you be certain that the tigress we have just seen is the same that you met on the ghaut?"

"My dear fellow," replied O'Grady, "if you had examined those royal features as long and at as close quarters as I did, you would not fail to recognize them again. Besides, you may have observed that our sleeping beauty will shortly become a mother; and the same condition was apparent in the animal which allowed me to go unharmed three weeks ago, so that I have no doubt as to her identity."

"It was the snuff which saved your life," I objected, being still reluctant to let the opportunity of establishing my reputation as a shikarry slip away.

"Perhaps so, at the last," answered O'Grady. "But even if she were not hungry, and had no appetite for *gigot d'homme au naturel*, she might have dropped me over the precipice, or broken my head with a mere pat of her paws. Remember the provocation I had given her when she was willing to pass peaceably on her way."

"Let her live," said I, "for one good turn deserves another."

O'Grady and I kept our own counsel, but some Badagas, or hill men, also happened to discover the tigress' basking-place, which it seemed was a favorite spot with her kind; and they speedily sent an ounce of lead into her brain from an old matchlock, whereby they became entitled to a government reward of fifty rupees.

Wishing, however, to secure the skin for myself, I offered the men an extra ten rupees and two bottles of arrack for it, and the bargain was forthwith closed.

I have never had another chance of shooting a tiger, but I have never felt dissatisfied with myself for sharing O'Grady's chivalrous resolution on that memorable afternoon to give grace for grace, even to a tigress.

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